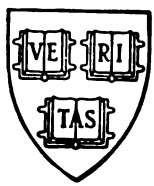

MY LIFETIME

BY

JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD

AUTHOR OF VARIOUS BOOKS (CHIEFLY REPRINTS FROM MAGAZINES)
AND CREATOR OF THE GAIETY THEATRE

VOL. II.

WITH PHOTOGRAVURE PORTRAIT

LONDON
SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON & COMPANY
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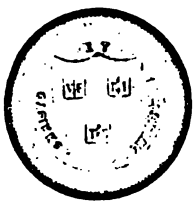

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can sit, see, hear, and breathe, without their attention being too much attracted from the stage—which is, after all, the most important part of a theatre—by experiments, however artistic, in mural finery. When consulted about the best covering for the stalls and balcony seats, I said I thought the dress-coats of men and the "society gowns" of ladies could not be improved upon. The frieze over the proscenium, painted by my old friend Mr. H. S. Marks, R.A., and representing a mediæval masque, was a great artistic work, but I said it ought to be hanging in a millionaire's gallery, where it would be preserved from destruction by gas, and replaced with a good honest clock—the manager's proper master—to keep the entertainments within proper limits. In part of my preliminary advertisements, I said:—

> The theatre, containing nearly two thousand seats, has been built with every regard for the public convenience, and has been decorated and furnished in the most costly and artistic style. All box, booking, and other fees will (with the necessary assistance of the public) be thoroughly abolished, and the performance will always conclude at a reasonable hour.

I kept my promise. During eighteen years, at the cost of about eighteen thousand pounds (always supposing that a fee system would not keep people out of the house), I never wavered for a moment, although at first, until two-thirds of the best London managers followed my example, I was looked upon as a fool and a visionary. My predecessors in this so-called theatrical reform were William Harrison, during the Pyne and Harrison management of Covent Garden, and Benjamin Webster at the old Adelphi; but in both cases, speaking from personal observation, I think their systems were established in a half-hearted way, and feebly carried out. At the Gaiety it meant business. I never put on spies to watch my servants, but the moment any violation of the rule

was reported, or discovered, instant and utter dismissal was the penalty. This soon became known, and the public knew it, and yet many of them did all they could at first to corrupt servants who were clothed and paid by me to attend to the comfort of my visitors. This portion of the public liked to look a gift donkey in the mouth.

The French papers drew the attention of Parisian managers to this feature of my first management, and to the improved sanitary arrangements of the theatre. The *Times*, speaking of the No Fee System (December 1868), said :—

> One reform deserves special notice, and it is that all fees, donations, or gratuities to attendants are, under any and every pretence, prohibited. There is to be no fee for booking, no charge for bills, no charge for taking care of cloaks, coats, or hats. The one payment at the door clears everything. This is a radical improvement, and one which will soon force other theatres, where the attendants live by open mendicancy, and where a programme is often not to be had at less than a shilling, to follow an example which should have been set long before.

Mr. and Mrs. George Grossmith (the father and mother of George and Weedon), Charles Millward, Tom Hood (the younger), Percy Doyle, Mr. and Mrs. Buckstone, Bayle Bernard, etc. These were present, and are amongst the many friends who have gone before. Shirley Brooks, Mark Lemon, and Charles Dickens were amongst the friends who could not come, and amongst those who are gone. The Duke of Fife (then Viscount Macduff), with his private tutor and young Mr. Gillie Farquhar, Arthur Sullivan, Miss Herbert, Edmund Routledge, Henry Labouchere, Dr. Howard Russell, Campbell Clarke, and Signor Bevignani were present, and Mr. Algernon Borthwick, forgetting the little matter of "ancient lights," regretted that he could not be one of the audience. The *Morning Post* was so close to the theatre on the west side, that our musical efforts amused the compositors (my old friends) at their work, although we must have often disturbed the editorial consultations. The theatre had this effect on the *Morning Post* property—it caused the fire offices to put up the rate of insurance in the direction of the theatrical standard. The Gaiety was a nuisance!

The first piece in the opening programme was a little operetta, adapted from the French, called *The Two Harlequins*, the music by the well-known French composer, M. Émile Jonas, the words by Mr. G. à Beckett. In this I began the fusion of the theatre and the music-hall. The operetta had only two characters—a man and a woman. The man was Charles Lyall, who had distinguished himself as a light comic tenor at the Opera—an artist of ability as a caricaturist, and a singer with sound musical training; the woman, Miss Constance Loseby, who came direct from very hard work at the "halls," which had not spoiled a magnificent voice that was a combination of soprano and contralto. Sir Julius Benedict,

while not, of course, approving altogether of her method, declared that her voice had much of the peculiar quality of Alboni's. The second piece was a three-act comic drama, adapted by Alfred Thompson from the French drama associated with Paulin Meunier, called *L'Escamoteur*. Its English title was *On the Cards*, and the company representing it were Mr. Alfred Wigan (this time without Mrs. Wigan), Mr. Stuart, a French actor of English extraction, who spoke good English, Mr. Maclean, Mr. Teesdale, Mr. Norton, Miss Litton, Miss Conway, Miss E. Farren, and Miss Madge Robertson, afterwards to become Mrs. Kendal. The third and last item in the programme was a New Operatic Extravaganza by Mr. W. S. Gilbert, called *Robert the Devil*, which included Miss E. Farren, Miss Loseby, Miss Tremaine (another singing recruit from the music-halls), Miss L. Henrie (a sister of Madame Henriquez, the concert singer), Miss Alice Lister, Miss Lillian Hastings, and Miss Emily Fowler; Mr. Richard Barker, Mr. Joseph

was openly and avowedly governed by a desire to put pleasing forms and faces before the public. My view of the stage was, that whatever it might be, judged from the lofty, not to say, stuck-up heights of Literature and Art, it was not a platform for the display of grandmothers and maiden aunts. If physical beauty could be got in connection with brains and dramatic talent, so much the better, but my first duty seemed to me to be to get physical beauty, and I got it. A distinguished and a distinguishing stamp was impressed upon the theatre by the cleverness and adaptability of Mr. Alfred Thompson, artist, author, editor and amateur actor, and some time a captain in the Enniskillen Dragoons. He had had a good artistic training in Munich and Paris, and had caught the style of the best Parisian designers of costume. He added to this a talent for selecting material and combining colours which amounted to genius. If any difficulty occurred in the cutting, fitting or style of one of his dresses, he could put it right in ten minutes with a pair of shears, and I fully believe he could have stitched the pieces together, if necessary. His heart was in his work. He came to me while the theatre was a mass of scaffolding and nothing more, and offered services which I gladly accepted. It is a real pleasure to me to acknowledge my obligations to him in this book. The Gaiety, chiefly owing to him, was the first theatre of its class—a so-called burlesque theatre—which started with dresses designed by an artist.

The chorus, the ballet, the band, and the scenery played up to Alfred Thompson's dresses, with one exception—the drawing-room with its furniture in the comedy-drama. I am not sure that Mr. Grieve had much experience of Society drawing-rooms of the palatial order; and if he had, the fire, and the necessity of reproducing his scenery, had driven him into

a corner, and the property man, whose name was Lightfoot, had a free hand in "modelling." What he produced to do duty for "Sir Gilbert's drawing-room, Wimbledon," was a combination of a grotto and dining-saloon at Cremorne Gardens, and a wonderful distortion of French furniture, white and gold, of a mixed and uncertain Louis something period, that was never equalled except by the Georgian nightmares at old Crockford's in St. James's Street. When the bill for this museum of curiosities came in, I thought of Proudhon's Socialistic maxim, "La propriété c'est le vol!" The cost of the furniture was about twice as much as I could have bought the real thing for—always supposing I wanted the real thing—in Wardour Street. "Lightfoot," I said, more in sorrow than in anger, as I paid the bill, "your foot may be light, but your hand is decidedly heavy." Was I not the proper manager for the Gaiety?

Our ambitious programme of three new pieces was got through without a hitch, including a hot and hurried speech which I was called upon to make, and people were sent home to their beds or to supper at a proper licensed victualler's hour.

The *Examiner*, then a highly critical journal, its dramatic critic being Professor Henry Morley, published the following paragraph at the end of a long article (December 26th, 1868):—

> We conclude by recording our sincere and cordial approbation of the management of the Gaiety Theatre. Mr. Hollingshead has performed an unparalleled feat. In a new theatre, with a new company, where the members were strangers to each other, and under great difficulties which he explained to the audience, he performed an operetta, a drama, and a burlesque without a single hitch, mistake, or delay. The whole machine worked with admirable precision and effect. As a performance, the character represented by Mr. Hollingshead, being the most arduous, was perhaps the best bit of acting in the whole entertainment. We are happy to welcome to the managerial chair a gentleman of so much intellect, taste, and energy.

Looking over the "notices" of our opening at this

interval of time, when little remains of the battle but its history, I should do wrong not to acknowledge the kindness, fairness, and liberality of the whole English press, and of a certain number of leading French, German, and Italian journals. My career as a journalist and an Alhambra director was spoken of in most appreciative terms, and the best wishes were expressed for my success as a theatrical manager. As my landlord, Mr. Lionel Lawson, was a leading proprietor of the *Daily Telegraph*, and my relations with the Levys and Lawsons were of the most friendly character, it might have been supposed that I had the thick and thin support of that particular organ. I never sought for any such support, and never hampered its representatives in any way in the free exercise of their critical judgment. My old friend Mr. Clement Scott will bear me out in this plain and necessary statement, and so will my numerous "brothers of the pen." If I had a "brush" with any of them, it was in fair open type, signed with my name, and never went beyond its public form as an advertisement. Our private relations were as little disturbed by these compositions as the contests between barristers in open court, which are laughed at in the evening over the mess table.

I did not starve for want of encouragement, both from the public and from literary friends. I think I may be excused for quoting the following letter:—

90, Gloucester Place,
Portman Square, W.

Dear Hollingshead,— *4th February*, 1869.

A line to thank you for last night, and to congratulate you on "the show." It is simply—of its size and class—the most comfortable, elegant, and beautifully decorated theatre I have ever seen anywhere—the approaches to it (lobbies and so on) a model to all theatres, and the people employed to open boxes and take coats, so unobtrusively useful and civil, that I and my friends walked into "box No. 8" wondering (with an experience of some other theatres) whether we were awake or dreaming. You have deserved a great public encourage-

ment—and I really believe you may count, in this case, on receiving your deserts.

I will certainly—as soon as my present dramatic occupations give me time—try and think of something for your stage. I fancy I know what you want, a nice little story, bright and lively, to begin at 8 or 8.30 and end at 10. If I find myself dropping salt on the tail of an idea, you shall hear from me again.

Very truly yours,

WILKIE COLLINS.

This, in parts, may seem rather exaggerated praise, but the Gaiety in 1869 stood alone as a model new theatre, and encouraged and stimulated the growth of others.

The programme gave plenty of "variety." Mr. Alfred Wigan was the leading character actor of the time, and such a creation as "Achille Dufour," the old French father of the "wonderful child" in *The First Night*, might stand without shame by the side of Phelps's "Sir Pertinax Macsycophant," Robson's burlesque "Medea," and Joe Jefferson's "Rip van Winkle." As my "leading man" he was often badly placed, as he was too *ultra-sec* for romantic parts; but whatever he did was full of intelligence and dramatic instinct. In study and finish he was more like a French than an English actor. Mr. Maclean was a versatile and safe member of the company—always satisfactory and something more in "old men," and Miss Litton and Miss Emily Fowler at that time were two actresses of promise, who afterwards made a name and became managers on their own account. Mr. Joseph Eldred was a rough, but clever, low comedian; and Mr. Richard Barker was a respectable actor, who afterwards became, both in England and America (he is still in America), a celebrated stage-manager. Miss Tremaine (now known as Madame Amadi, of the Carl Rosa Opera Company) justified me in transferring her from the music-halls, and so did Miss Constance

Loseby, who was as attractive as an actress as she was effective as a singer. Miss Madge Robertson had a reputation before she joined the Gaiety company. She did not diminish it during her first engagement; and when she came back to play intermittently at Gaiety *matinées*, and under my management at another theatre, the world knew, admired, and honoured her as Mrs. Kendal. I have left Miss E. Farren (Mrs. Robert Soutar) to the last. In the opening programme she played boys' parts, and played them year after year, occasionally varying them, but not often, with female character parts. I made her a page-boy in the comedy-drama, and, of course, she played "Robert the Devil" in the burlesque. Like Miss Marie Wilton (Mrs. Bancroft), she could play anything, dress in anything, say and do anything, with any quantity of "go," and without a tinge of vulgarity. How pleasant the engagement must have been to both of us requires no more proof than the simple statement of the fact that she remained with me for eighteen years, during the whole period of my Gaiety management. Her husband, Mr. Robert Soutar, who was my stage-manager, and a useful actor, came with her, and remained with us during the same long period. In all theatrical history there is probably no similar instance of such a long engagement, existing only as a business contract, between one actress and one manager. When I transferred the Gaiety Theatre to my successor, Mr. George Edwardes, in 1886, she still remained in the same company, and, but for her deplorable illness, would be an active and leading member of it still.

The Lord Chamberlain's licence for the theatre was got, as a matter of course, but the twin establishment, the Gaiety Restaurant, now completed, and joined to the theatre much as the Siamese Twins were joined, had to be opened, and before it could be opened it had

to be licensed. The application was duly made at the March Brewster Sessions (1869), Mr. Poland holding our brief, but he pleaded without success. The magistrates of the Strand Division unanimously (with one solitary exception) refused the licence. I had no pecuniary interest in the Gaiety Restaurant, and none for the matter of that in the "bars" of the theatre, as they were to form part of the Restaurant, but the application was made in my name as a question of form. Neither Mr. Lawson nor myself felt disposed to sit down quietly under this decision, and surrender the idea of the joint buildings—theatre and restaurant: so an appeal was decided upon to the Middlesex Sessions, and the merits of the case (I presume) were put before the licensing magistrates privately as well as publicly. Mr. Poland and Mr. Montagu Williams appeared for us, and Mr. Metcalf appeared against us; but after a short hearing, and speeches in our favour delivered by Lord Ranelagh and Mr. Sheridan, M.P., the licence was granted by a large majority, only four hands being held up

called "Oakwood Hall." We consulted Nash's great book on the historical houses of England together, and I spent many days and much money in collecting furniture. I refused to have any more "modelling." With painted stage cloths to represent oak flooring, imitation stained windows, Turkey carpets, statuary, and old pictures, we produced an interior that was much in advance of the stage settings of the period. Mr. Grieve excelled himself in the rustic scenery, and one picture, "Love Lane," I kept for many years, as I thought it was too good a work of art to be "painted out" and destroyed. The *Times* called the old Hall "a marvellously appointed room," and said the scenery was "all the most fastidious spectator could desire."

To cast *Dreams*, several additions had to be made to the company. Miss Rachel Sanger and Mrs. Henry Leigh were engaged, and the latter remained for many years in the theatre to play old women. The most important new comer was Mr. John Clayton, a comparatively new but promising actor, who could play young men with grace and appearance, but who preferred eccentric parts of strong character. He afterwards made a name and became a manager. The Gaiety was always a forcing-house for young managers. Mr. Alfred Wigan played two parts, a father and son, which is always a defect in a piece—a defect of construction, and a defect of casting. There were several good character sketches, notably a very old Duke and an old peasant, and there was much rough force about the "horsey" Earl, represented by Mr. John Clayton, a contrast to the somewhat sentimental young German played by Mr. Alfred Wigan. This latter part required an actor with more enthusiastic spirit and romantic force; and when the drama was revived in the autumn with Mr. Henry Neville in this character, the old German father being given to

Sam Emery, the benefit of the change was at once apparent. The radical fault of the play was a want of dramatic backbone, and it added one more comparative failure to those the popular author had met with outside Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft's distinguished little theatre. Robertson was like an artist who can paint cabinet pictures but not great battle-pieces. He was a most delightful author to deal with—kind, considerate, and liberal. I had known him in the days of his poverty, and found no change in him in the days of his prosperity. It was a pleasure to watch him at rehearsals. He was not the swearing, blustering stage-manager. When a stupid mistake occurred, he did not stamp and tear his hair; he quietly and effectively put the matter right. The little school-children in the piece loved him. He took them, one after the other, tenderly by the hand and led them to their places on the stage. He bore his reverse like an amiable philosopher; and when I proposed to revive the piece, he tried to dissuade me,

our numerous *matinées* were never suspended. Mr. Lütz's plan was very simple; he worked hard all day, and scored his music during the night. His greatest *tour de force* was, perhaps, the production of Offenbach's opera of *Barbe Bleue* in four days, in which he was helped by principals who knew their parts. His skill in producing an original piece was first put to the test about the middle of May 1869, when a spectacle in five scenes, called *Columbus*, took the place of *Robert the Devil*. *Columbus*, written by Alfred Thompson, was not so much a burlesque as an opera-bouffe, the music being a *pasticcio*. The composers drawn upon were Offenbach, Bellini, Louis, E. Jonas, Gounod, Balfe, Verdi, Hervé, Boullard, Leo Delibes, with original music by Lütz. The scenery was painted by Telbin and Son, Gordon, and Matt Morgan, and the fancy costumes, as usual, were designed by the author. It certainly was a brilliant scenic display, and the Licenser of Plays, Mr. W. B. Donne, when he saw it with his experienced eyes, expressed an amiable hope that the "treasury" would not lose by such a costly production.

CHAPTER II.

The theatre has to grow — The stall prices increased — First Royal visit—Advertising—Management—Finance—"Matinées"—W. S. Gilbert's first comedy—Its radical fault—A Gaiety journal—Many stage changes—Adelaide Neilson—J. L. Toole—Henry Irving—A play with a strong cast—Mr. Irving's name—Press misprints—Dickens's visit—A burlesque by G. A. Sala—Manifestoes.

EVEN before the production of *Columbus* I had to increase the dressing-room accommodation on the stage, which, as originally designed, was more fit for a comedy house than a theatre supplementing drama with spectacular burlesque. For *Columbus*, with its increased ballet and chorus, I had to call in the carpenters and builders, until every corner of the fly-floor, mezzanine, and cellar-floor was utilised with the utmost care and ingenuity. The orchestra stalls at this time were *7s.*, and the other prices in proportion; and it was not until Mr. Bancroft raised his stall-prices at the Prince of Wales's Theatre, Tottenham Court Road, to *10s.* (or *10s. 6d.*?) that, at the suggestion of my landlord, on a point of pride, I followed Mr. Bancroft's lead as far as *10s.*

I now altered the hour of opening to seven o'clock, instead of half-past six, withdrawing *Dreams* on the expiration of Miss Robertson's engagement, placing shorter pieces in the earlier part of the bill, and making *Columbus* the chief piece of the evening. On the 21st of June, the Prince and Princess of Wales (accompanied by the Crown Prince of Denmark) paid their first official visit to the theatre. I was much amused

by the anxiety shown by the late Mr. Chapman, who was the manager for Mr. Thomas Mitchell of Bond Street, the recognised agent for Royalty at that period. He surveyed the Royal box and its approaches, and expressed himself perfectly satisfied. I was not surprised, as I knew the block of rooms, private entrances, etc., was the best in London. He seemed, however, to have doubts about the furniture, as it was not smothered with gingerbread gold, and sent down a clumsy Louis Seize chair, which I received politely and put in a corner. The Prince was perfectly satisfied with his treatment, and for some years afterwards the Gaiety became his favourite theatre.

I was a considerable but judicious advertiser. I never indulged in shop bills and bill-posting, in placards inside or outside omnibuses, in panels in railway carriages, and sandwich-men. On my opening day I had two hundred of the latter parading and obstructing the streets, but only on that occasion. I never madly chalked the pavements with the titles of my productions. I was a newspaper man, and I was a newspaper advertiser. I did not expend my energy and money in full-page announcements one day, and sink into microscopic paragraphs the next. I had one or two sensational advertisements, but, as a rule, my announcements were moderate, steady, never discontinued, and well-displayed. They were always clear and explicit. I did not, in my advertisements, assume that the whole world knew where the Gaiety stood, and that the word "Gaiety" alone meant a theatre, and not a new fish-sauce or mackintosh. I put Gaiety Theatre, and I added Strand, although I had made every cabman acquainted with the place by sending free tickets to head-quarters. I stated the hour of opening, the hour of closing, the prices, and the time of the commencement of each piece, as if it had been the departure of a railway train. I

never postponed the production of a piece, but stuck to my date and hour at any cost, not to inconvenience the public. I was my own sanitary inspector, and had the theatre kept sweet and clean. I certainly was a pioneer in the direction of cleanliness and comfort. I took a pride in showing that a literary man is not necessarily a dreamer, although I disappointed some of my literary friends by not showing too much veneration for stage literature. My theory of management was that I had to provide the public with what they wanted, and not what I liked. If a man, woman, or child came in and asked for a sausage, it was not my place to tell them they wanted a "green carnation." I might have thought that a carnation or a rose would have been more "elevating" than a sausage. I was a shop-keeper, not a thinker. I never sat a performance out at my own theatre. I watched and directed every piece at rehearsal, down to the minutest details; but when it was produced, like a ship that was launched, I sent it on its

at the Gaiety and other theatres about one million and a quarter sterling. I mention these figures for the instruction of ignorant business men who think a theatre is a chandler's shop carried on by ragged vagabonds with a capital of twopence-halfpenny. I may have got rid of my £120,000 in theatrical speculations outside the Gaiety, but they were real theatrical speculations, and not investments in "gilt-edged securities." I am not aware that soap-boilers have always shown more prudence.

One delusion may as well be disposed of at once—the delusion that because Mr. Lionel Lawson was a wealthy man and a friend, he was always my "backer." Neither he nor any member of his family ever occupied that position. He was my landlord only—(a very liberal landlord)—except for about a year, when he joined me as a partner. This partnership produced him £3,000. My large rental, punctually paid for eighteen years, more than covered the purchase of the land and building of the Gaiety, and gave him a substantial balance besides. As an investment, John Hollingshead was not a bad one for a capitalist. When Mr. Lionel Lawson's sudden and lamented death occurred in 1879, he was my debtor to the extent of about £1,100, which was paid by his executors.

I had to contend against the novelty of the theatre and the memory of the Strand Music-hall. I had to make the theatre known as a new house, distinct from the Strand Music-hall. I chose the newspapers, because when bills and posting originated and were largely used there were only about half-a-dozen sixpenny papers published, and playbills had to be sought at pastrycooks and tobacconists. In 1869 things were slightly different. The *Newspaper Press Directory* was almost as bulky as "Kelly's" great London guide-book, which I class with Shakespeare, the

"Arabian Nights," and the few great books of the world. I did not discountenance "dodges." I gave away fans which contained all necessary information about the theatre; on "Valentine's Day" I gave away "Gaiety Valentines," and I had an electric search-light on the top of the building supplied by an enormous primary battery. What I did in 1869, I more than repeated in 1878, when I brought the first modern electric light, produced by steam, to London and England. I made the theatre known and popular, by obstinately keeping it open all the year round, like a tavern or a restaurant. I instituted *matinées* on a novel principle. The Saturday morning performance of pantomimes was no novelty, but *matinées* in which rival pieces and companies were tempted to show their attractions in the afternoon (called "morning") at the Gaiety was free-trade policy that made many people think I was a lunatic. The *matinées* became popular and were looked for. If a new piece or new actor or actress wanted to be tried, the Gaiety was the house selected. Two, three, four, and sometimes six *matinées* a week were often given, until the stage was ploughed into furrows by overwork. The newspaper reporters regarded me as a demon: I was merely a tradesman, unbound by tradition.

Shortly after the production of *Columbus* Mr. Alfred Wigan fell ill, and this necessitated a re-arrangement of the earlier part of the programme. My relations with Mr. W. S. Gilbert had always been of the most friendly character, and he gave me a play to read—his first comedy—which I produced immediately. Its literary merits were very great, and it could be read with pleasure. It was in three acts, and was called *An Old Score*. I engaged Mr. Sam Emery and Mr. Henry Neville for the cast, and used Mr. John Clayton, and also engaged a very charming little

actress named Rosina Ranoe, who is now loved and admired by a large circle of friends and a numerous family, under the respected name of Mrs. Frank Burnand. The *Old Score* was said to be founded on a passage in the life of Mr. Dargan, the great Irish contractor, and Sadleir, the banker who committed suicide on Hampstead Heath, but as a play it was original, and Mr. Gilbert's first serious effort as a playwright. It was like many of the comedies by Douglas Jerrold—a success with a first night and critical audience, but not an enduring success with the public. It was too like real life, and too unconventional. The leading characters were a rascally father, and a son who did not hesitate to tell him of his rascality. The dialogue was not playhouse pap. It was a little too brutally straightforward. Perhaps that is why I liked the play—in manuscript, but manuscript is not the stage; the closet is not the theatre; and one man, even of average intelligence, possessed or not possessed of the managerial instinct, is not an audience, any more than a dress rehearsal before a jury of experts is a public performance. There was something wrong about *An Old Score*, and I discovered it one night on going, as I sometimes did, into the pit or the gallery. This time it was the gallery. The curtain was down after the scene in which the son roundly abused the father. Two men of the working class, instead of drinking at the bars, were having an argument. "I don't care, Bill," said one, who appeared to have the best of the dispute, "he didn't ought to speak to the old man like that! No matter what he is—he's his father!" That was the solution of the mystery. The piece offended the domestic sentiment of the broad public.

Mr. Gilbert afterwards revived it at the Court Theatre under another title, but the result, I fancy, was the same.

In the summer of 1869 my friend Mr. Frederick Boyle and myself started a small theatrical fly-leaf—ambitiously called the *Gaiety Gazette*. It was little more than an enlarged Gaiety programme, with a certain amount of theatrical, society, and even political gossip. I gather now from its pages that the "Woman's Rights" question was then rampant, and that the American papers treated with the utmost contempt a rumour that Charles Dickens was to be offered a peerage. They declared that they would never call him Baron Boz or Lord Gadshill; and to them and their vast reading population he would always be Dickens. The *Gaiety Gazette*, like the *Weekly Mail*, was not a strong stripling, and it died quietly and peacefully in the arms of the British Museum.

We were not idle at the Gaiety Theatre. *Columbus* was expensive to run, so it was withdrawn in the summer for a lighter burlesque by Alfred Thompson, called *Linda of Chamouni*, and *Dreams* was revived with the new cast, pending the production of a drama by John Oxenford and Horace Wigan, called *The*

however, are reproduced as opportunity serves.—The Free List for any bona fide members of the Literary, Artistic, and Scientific professions is never suspended.—The abolition of Fees for everything is strictly enforced in every part of the Theatre, and the performances, though they include an Operetta, a long Drama, and Spectacular Burlesque, always conclude at or before a quarter-past eleven. The Theatre is kept open every night, all the year round, and the prices are arranged to suit all classes.

Oct., 1869. JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

On the 18th October, 1869, the other part of the Siamese twin was completed. The restaurant connected with the theatre was opened, and Mr. Lionel Lawson's idea took bodily shape. The idea may have been adapted from the French, but it was undoubtedly new in England.

On the 13th December, 1869, my old friend of twelve years' standing (at that time), Mr. J. L. Toole, made his first appearance at the Gaiety, bringing with him a drama which he had tried in the country, written by Henry J. Byron, and called *Uncle Dick's Darling*. I again made one or two important changes in the company to do justice to the piece, and with some difficulty got Mr. Henry Irving from Drury Lane one week before the expiration of his engagement with Mr. F. B. Chatterton, and the run of Boucicault's much-talked of drama of *Formosa*. Irving was most anxious to come. The cast of the piece may be given as a record:—

"UNCLE DICK'S DARLING."

(*Drama in three Acts, by* HENRY J. BYRON.)

DICK DOLLOND (a Cheap Jack)	Mr. J. L. TOOLE.
Mr. CHEVENIX	Mr. HENRY IRVING.
Hon. CLAUDE LORRIMER	Mr. H. R. TEESDALE.
JOE LEONARD (a Blacksmith)	Mr. JOHN CLAYTON.
Mrs. TORRINGTON	Miss MARIA ELSWORTHY.
ALICE RENSHAW	Miss LITTON.
KATE LANDRAIL	Miss L. HENRIE.
A SERVANT	Miss A. HERBERT.
MARY BELTON	Miss ADELAIDE NEILSON.

Four members of the cast afterwards became managers on their own account — Miss Litton, Mr. John Clayton, Mr. J. L. Toole, and Mr. Irving. Mr. Irving's make-up suggested Mr. Disraeli, and in "Mr. Chevenix" he had a Dombey-like character, and the best he had yet appeared in in London. He had yet a great reputation to make. The *Daily News* (through a printer's error) called him "Mr. Tröning," and the *Globe* (not through a printer's error) called him "Mr. Irvin." The *Daily News* gave high praise to the stage mounting. All pieces produced at the Gaiety were well mounted, and the press always said so, even when they abused the authors. The *Daily News*, on this occasion, said :—

> The final change from the blacksmith's shop—a very elaborate and picturesque scene—to the old village green, and the dreaming hawker still asleep on the cart-shafts, is perhaps one of the most marvellous performances of stage mechanism yet achieved. Time was when inexperienced authors were warned against expecting one heavy set scene to follow another; and even now the most experienced are not able to escape the clumsy contrivances known as "carpenters' scenes"—that is, scenes painted on a mere curtain, brought on near to the foot-lights for the purpose of giving time for building more elaborate scenery behind. But if changes such as these are possible, it is certainly difficult to understand why these rude devices should be permitted to flourish.

The explanation is very simple. Mr. Byron gave me his ideas, and, with the assistance of Mr. W. Hann the artist, we put into drama, for the first time, a trick scene of the kind hitherto only used in pantomimes.

The only time that Dickens visited the Gaiety Theatre was during the run of *Uncle Dick's Darling*. I gave him the Royal Box and received him with all the honours of Royalty. At the Gaiety this did not mean much more than comfort and civility, a few of the best cigars, flowers if there were ladies, and the best brandy that could be purchased. I avoided "fuss" on these occasions, and I believe my

"new departure" was appreciated. The farce of walking backwards with two wax-candles had long been given up, even by the most old-fashioned managers. My acting manager, Mr. Arthur Smith, had been a "Cambridge man" at the time the Prince of Wales was at College; and if he was a little brusque to "outsiders" and "free-listers," he knew how to behave as a gentleman.

Mr. Dickens was an admirer and an old patron of time Toole, and he saw Mr. Henry Irving for the first exce time. He made no remark about Irving's acting, of pt that it was very good, and that the character Dor Mr. Chevenix was evidently modelled upon d nbey. Dickens was a little "cranky" in his h ra matic criticism. I remember him telling me that at e preferred Mr. John E. Owens—a clever imperson- ar or of a Western American farmer, who appeared so the Adelphi—to Mr. Joe Jefferson. In this, as in me other things, his judgment was faulty.

On the 15th of March, 1870, Dickens gave his final Re ding at St. James's Hall, choosing the "Christmas Ca rol" and the "Trial" from "Pickwick." On the 2 nd of April he was taken ill at Preston, and co veyed back to London. On the 8th of June, at Ga dshill, he had an attack of paralysis, and he died in a state of unconsciousness the following evening. Walking down Fleet Street on the 10th of June, 1870, I heard the sad news from "Daddy" Levy of the *Daily Telegraph*.

Wishing to enlist well-known literary men in the service of the theatre, I prevailed upon Mr. George Augustus Sala to write a burlesque, and between us we chose for distortion the subject of *Wat Tyler*. I met Mr. Sala at Frankfort, and we talked the matter over on our road to Paris. It was at last called *Wat Tyler, M.P.*, and produced on December 21, 1869, the anniversary of the opening of the theatre.

The writing, it is needless to say, was good, but Mr. Sala had not quite learnt the mechanical trick of burlesque authorship. I illustrated the piece with all honour to a distinguished author, and take all the responsibility of choosing a subject that was not as promising as it looked. As a Christmas spectacle I am sure it left nothing to be desired. On this point I may again quote the *Times*, though every other paper was equally complimentary:—

As far as the work of stage decoration is concerned, Mr. G. A. Sala's new burlesque *Wat Tyler, M.P.*, may be pronounced one of the most costly and elaborate spectacles ever seen at any theatre. A period marked by costume and architecture different as possible from anything of the present day has been selected for illustration, and the work of illustration has been performed to perfection. One admirably executed picture follows another, and the quaint dance of the court is excelled by the merrier revel of the maypole.

Mr. Toole was the comic democrat, and Miss Rose Coghlan was included in the cast. Miss Farren, as usual, was admirable, and Miss Loseby, Miss Litton, and the whole company did their best. The scenery was painted by Mr. Grieve and Mr. Gordon, and the dresses designed by Alfred Thompson. The music, including many old English airs, was arranged and composed by Mr. Lütz. The scenes were five:—A Town in Essex, Tyler's 'Umble 'Ome, King Richard's Court at Baynard's Castle, The Little Ease at the Tower, and Old Holborn Bridge and Snow Hill. Mr. Sala published one manifesto and I published another —the No. 1 of my long series. This was Mr. Sala's:—

The object of this humble dramatic exercitation is to vindicate the fame, and rehabilitate the memory, of a poor patriot, who for several centuries has been wantonly and universally misunderstood. It is NOT generally known that Wat Tyler was a hatter. It is NOT generally known that Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, and Attenborough, the famous Amphytrion, flourished in the reign of Richard the Second. It is NOT generally known that a tax on ladies' chignons was levied in the year 1378. To make these long-observed facts manifest, the author of *Wat Tyler* has had resource to the study of the most recondite and

abstruse historical authorities. The pages of Fitzstephen, Camden and How, Sir Harris Nicolas, the "Liber Albus," and Boyle's "Court Guide," have been diligently searched; and, should any doubt arise in the minds of the patrons of the Gaiety as to the strict historical accuracy of Tyler's tale, those patrons are respectfully referred to a work of conclusive and indubitable authority: To wit "Hollingshead's Chronicles." Supported by this unquestionable evidence, the author of *Wat Tyler* is surely entitled to ask the proud question, "Am I right, or any other man?"

G. A. S.

This was mine:—

To-day we complete the anniversary of the opening of the Gaiety Theatre. With the exception of Christmas Day, Ash-Wednesday, and Good Friday, this house—a rare thing in London—has been open every night for a whole year with one unbroken form of entertainment. That entertainment, consisting of operetta, drama, and operatic extravaganza, has been copied by several Metropolitan Theatres.

It is a fact, which may be taken for what it is worth, that the Gaiety has given constant employment to nearly 300 members of the Dramatic Profession. Though the Management never pledged itself to patronise the so-called *British Drama*, the British Drama has fared very well at the Gaiety. Out of the five plays produced, three have been of English growth, viz.:—*Dreams*, by T. Robertson; *An Old Score*, by W. S. Gilbert; and *Uncle Dick's Darling*, by H. J. Byron; the other two were avowed adaptations. The extravaganzas, as usual, have been English, and the author of them, Mr. Alfred Thompson, is a gentleman who made his first appearance as a dramatic author at the Gaiety. To-night another gentleman, Mr. George Augustus Sala, will appeal to you for the first time in a similar capacity.

Those who have watched the pieces at this Theatre will admit that much has been done by the Management to raise the artistic standard of stage costume. The comfort of the public has been carefully studied in the front of the house, and the result has been an amount of patronage very satisfactory in the past, and very encouraging for the future.

Monday, December 20th, 1869. JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

CHAPTER III.

Rheumatism—Attack on Ash Wednesday—The benefit system—Offenbach—The "free list" in Paris—1870—War or revolution?—*The Princess of Trebizonde*—*Opéra-bouffe*—Old comedy—*The Man of Quality*—Vanbrugh deodorised—English opera, or opera in English—Charles Santley—*Zampa*—M. Hervé—*Aladdin*—Japanese costumes—Mrs. Keeley.

AFTER the production of *Wat Tyler* I got my Christmas-box in the shape of my third attack of rheumatic fever. My second attack was in 1855, when, like a Guy Fawkes, I was fixed in one of Ward's invalid chairs for a fortnight, my bodily position being altered from time to time by cranks and levers. To a gentleman afflicted with energy of the parched-pea-in-the-frying-pan order, this was rather irksome. It was, perhaps, more. It may have had something to do, as my illness lasted three months, with my want of success in business at that period.

The attack of 1869 was even more severe, and I fully believe my landlord, my company, and my friends thought I was going to exchange the Gaiety for another and a better world. They were mistaken: I lived;—my doctors died. In less than two months, this time, I threw off my third attack, and have never been troubled with rheumatic fever since. The attacks were volcanic on each occasion, and probably "cleared the system." I willingly give rheumatic fever this testimonial. It is something like a disease, with no humbug about it—a disease it is an honour to struggle with.

I celebrated my return to health and sanity (for I believe I was mad with pain at times) by beginning

my long and persistent attack on the Ash Wednesday restriction—the remains of the "Passion Week" restrictions—which prevented on that day the opening of theatres in London.

My first letter appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* of March 2nd, 1870, and was signed with my favourite signature, which was almost too well known to be strictly anonymous—"A London Manager."

THE THEATRES ON ASH WEDNESDAY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "DAILY TELEGRAPH."

SIR,—Belonging as I do to an overmuch licensed and supervised class, I venture, with great diffidence, to utter a mild protest against the compulsory closing of theatres on Ash Wednesday. To-night the refined and intellectual entertainment which I am in the habit of placing before the public is suspended by an order of the Lord Chamberlain, and my patrons are thrown into the arms of those who provide what I have been taught to regard as a much lower form of amusement. The two hundred and eighty intelligent beings in my employment are, with two exceptions, deprived of this night's work and their night's salary, the exceptions being a young lady with a voice, who will sing at three concerts in the course of the evening, and an active and popular comedian, who will perform at a country theatre about one hundred miles from London. Some of the less fortunate members of my company have asked me why the law compels us to take a holiday in the stormy months of February or March, while the Crystal Palace represents the opera bouffe of *Barbe Bleue*, and most of the great music-halls and casinos remain open. They are scarcely consoled when I tell them that places licensed by the magistrates on the Surrey side have been allowed to break the strict letter of the law with impunity, while theatres licensed by the Lord Chamberlain have been ruled with more unbending severity. The Church has, doubtless, still much to do with these Lenten prohibitions, and yet the Church is not above drawing some portion of its sustenance from the playhouse. I pay about two hundred pounds a year in Church and Rector's rates, and have never even had a prayer offered up for the success of my entertainment.—I am, Sir, yours, etc.,

A LONDON MANAGER.

March 1st, 1870.

When I started in management I set my face against the benefit system, and in one of the first engagements I made—that with Mr. Alfred Wigan—I arranged his honorarium on a scale to compensate

n for any pecuniary loss in not having a benefit. ntleman as he was, he still clung to this old gabond feature of the playhouse. Custom and dition in the end, however, proved too much for r abstract principles, and I conceded "benefits" to ss Adelaide Neilson and Mr. John Clayton, which re used as precedents. These benefits enabled the ress and the actor to appear in the old-fashioned t very human play of the *Hunchback*, one as "Julia," d the other as "Modus."

In the early part of the year I had been in Paris, d seeing Offenbach's *opéra-bouffe*, the *Princess of ebisonde*, it struck me I might introduce this class entertainment at the Gaiety, as it differed very le from our burlesques. I went over again to make necessary arrangements. The previous year I d twice tested the civility of some of my brother nagers in Paris. Wishing to see Sardou's *Patrie* the height of its popularity, Alfred Thompson and interviewed the manager, M. Raphael Felix, the other of Madame Rachel. The tickets were at a minal premium at the various ticket bazaars, and ey were being hawked about at various prices, cording to the Parisian system, in the gutters. a great managerial favour, being authors, artists, d managers, we were accorded two seats at the per box-office price—"*Au prix de location!*" ter in the year (1869) Mr. Sala, Mr. F. Boyle, and yself at the Gaîté Théâtre were refused inter- tional press privileges; and when I went to the uffes Parisiens to see the *Princess of Trebisonde* ce more before I bought it, and though armed th a note from M. Offenbach the composer, the terview at the box-office was of a most melancholy scription, and at last I got a private box, one of the ittle ease" boxes, on condition that I paid the per cent. Government tax, collected nightly, called

the "Droit des Pauvres." I found that there was more difficulty in getting free professional seats at a theatre than a Government contract, and from that time, in all my large and varied dealings with French theatres, with the exception of the Théâtre Français, I paid my money rather than be worried with "negotiations."

When I first saw the *Princess of Trebizonde* in the January of 1870, I went afterwards to a *bal masque* at the old Opera House, which was afterwards burnt, in the Rue Lepelletier. Paris was brewing mischief. I as distinctly heard the rumblings of the coming trouble, as Arthur Young, the agricultural traveller, in the last century heard the rumblings of 1789. If there had not been a Franco-German war in 1870, there would have been a revolution.

In casting the *Princess of Trebizonde*, which was one of the earliest of the imported *opéras-bouffe*, I certainly sacrificed a little of its musical character to make it fit Mr. Toole and Miss Farren. Miss Farren played the part represented in Paris by Madame Chaumont, one of the great little geniuses of the French comic stage. Miss Loseby, Miss Tremaine, and Mr. Perrini were quite equal to the musical requirements of the piece. The choruses were excellent, and the elegant dresses designed by Alfred Thompson surpassed the Parisian production. The piece had only one fault: it was too pretty and proper—a Savoy piece, long before that theatre was built, and Gilbert's burlesques in long clothes entered into competition with his Gaiety burlesques in short clothes, of which he provided the first specimen.

In France the piece was preceded by an operetta: in England it was preceded by Mr. Alfred Wigan in one of his inimitable broken English characters.

In May 1870, I thought I would follow the ex-

ample of a distinguished author-manager, Sheridan, and a distinguished author, Colley Cibber, and tinker one of the "old comedies." I selected Sir John Vanbrugh's *Relapse*—one of the broadest plays in the English language. Some of the papers said I "had performed an almost impossible feat," and I showed how the trick was done in the following "note" on the programme:—

This play is condensed and altered from the celebrated but now unactable comedy, in five acts, by Sir John Vanbrugh, called *The Relapse*, which was written as a sequel to Cibber's *Fool in Fashion*. It was first performed at Drury Lane Theatre in 1697. Sheridan made an adaptation of this comedy, produced at Drury Lane in 1777, under the title of *The Trip to Scarborough*, which some of the critics said was not calculated to increase his reputation. Probably no adaptation could increase the fame of the author of *The School for Scandal*. Discarding Sheridan's plan, I have cut out all that portion of the comedy which justified the title of *The Relapse*, without losing anything that belongs to the character of Lord Foppington. Like many badly constructed modern dramas, *The Relapse* has two distinct plots, or such an operation could not have been performed.

I called my version *The Man of Quality*, as it dealt

that Glitters is not Gold, and *The Waterman*. One of the "junior members of the company" was Mr. Ludwig, who afterwards became leading baritone of the Carl Rosa Company—playing, amongst other things, Wagner's *Flying Dutchman*. When he was offered the operatic engagement he did not want to take it, or to give up his minor position at the Gaiety. He was the first member of the company that I had to talk to like a father."

In June 1870, I conceded a benefit to Mr. Alfred Wigan, and he played in French with Mdlle. Leonide Leblanc, one of the most beautiful women of her time. Mrs. Wigan made her first and only appearance at the Gaiety on this occasion in the *Poor Nobleman*. She was a most perfect comedy actress, and was even superior to her husband.

After passing through a few weeks of melodrama, in which Charles Reade's *Courier of Lyons*, with Mr. Hermann Vezin and others, was preceded by an operetta and followed by the short burlesque of *Lalla di Chamouni* (a great favourite with the Prince of Wales, who once "commanded" it as a "special" performance), the Gaiety suddenly blossomed into an English Opera House. It arrived at this position after a preliminary canter with a programme of four short pieces—a real variety entertainment, comprising a comic ballet, a little comic drama by Planché, an operetta, *La Poupée de Nuremberg*, by Adolphe Adam, the operatic father of Offenbach, and a musical extravaganza by the latter composer, called *Trombalcazar*. The last piece was principally played by the regular Gaiety company, but the operetta had the valuable aid of Madame Florence Lancia, Mr. W. H. Cummings, Mr. Aynsley Cook, and Mr. J. D. Stoyle—a quartette that would not have been out of place at any opera-house. This piecemeal programme—not only a triple, but a quadruple bill—soon gave place to

Offenbach's *Barbe Bleue.* Miss Julia Matthews, called by many of the critics the "English Schneider," played Boulotte, and the opera, which was in three acts, was strengthened by an interpolated ballet. Our restless activity produced Charles Dibdin's *Quaker*, Gay's *Beggars' Opera*, Donizetti's *Betly*, etc., as supplemental pieces to *Barbe Bleue*, as we now had almost a double singing company, and it was necessary to find parts for Miss Farren. Miss Loseby, in singing "Cease your Funning," was accused of introducing *roulades*, and I had to defend her by saying the version she sang was Miss Stephens's; and if she had used Madame Catalani's, the *roulades* would have been more elaborate still.* All this and more was only paving the way for the re-appearance of Mr. Charles Santley on the stage, and I tempted him to temporarily forsake the concert-room by offering to produce, for the first time in England, Hérold's popular opera of *Zampa.* Mr. Santley had ample support, and I had the experienced operatic-business aid of

Miss Maria Harris, etc. This was a solid feast, although I had sent Miss E. Farren to Manchester until Christmas.

During the run of *Zampa* I was called from dinner one evening (Oct. 14th, 1870), about six o'clock, and told the theatre was on fire. I had only a few hundred yards to go, and in five minutes I was in the balcony lobby of the house. The first thing I saw was a gasping waiter from the restaurant, who had a pail of water in his hands, which he was ready to throw on to the carpets or against the curtains, or over me or anywhere. It was nothing but a fire in a cellar of the restaurant, a hundred yards from the theatre proper, and was confined to that cellar. It caused a few hours' excitement and many newspaper paragraphs, but did not interfere with the performance. Certain critical remarks about *Zampa* in some of the papers encouraged the following rejoinder :—

The reception accorded to Mr. Santley in a theatre where his magnificent voice is not "over-crowed" by one of those mammoth orchestras which are the glory of autocratic conductors and the destruction of much vocal art, is a gratifying proof, if any were needed, that good singing is universally attractive. The two extremes of a theatrical audience may, and do, differ in their appreciation of dramatic literature; but they meet on common ground in the presence of an opera like *Zampa*. Mr. Santley's engagement at the Gaiety was decided upon more than fourteen months ago, and no attempt has been made to associate it with so-called "English Opera." Good music, even more than good literature, has no particular nationality, and *Zampa* is as much English as *Lurline* or the *Bohemian Girl*. The patronage of "native talent" has been chiefly shown in the selection of English singers, and no work will be performed for the mere sake of selling pretty ballads at the music-shops.—J. H.

Mr. Santley, in his Memoirs, says the band was not large enough, though he admits that it was quite large enough for operas of the Opéra Comique repertory. He says that he could have made more money at concerts. I can quite believe him; but I paid him what he asked. The work was certainly very heavy.

Zampa was withdrawn after a run of six weeks, Mr. Santley singing every night, and a patchwork bill was again resorted to pending the production of Auber's *Fra Diavolo*. The patchwork consisted of *The Happy Village* (*pasticcio*), Donizetti's *Betly*, Dibdin's musical farce of *The Waterman*, in which Mr. Santley played "Tom Tug"—a relief after *Zampa*—and the concluding piece was *Trombalcazar*. This was another quadruple bill. November the 24th, 1870, we were ready with *Fra Diavolo*, with Mr. Santley as the "Brigand." The piece was well cast and performed, and was a success, but the transposition of the celebrated serenade "Young Agnes" to suit Mr. Santley's voice was, in my opinion, a defect, although unavoidable. Mr. Santley never acted better. It was the first time the character had ever been attempted by a baritone.

At Christmas, 1870, Mr. Toole and Miss Farren returned, and Mr. Santley withdrew to return at Easter, 1871. M. Hervé, the composer of *Le Petit Faust* and *Chilperic*, came over from Paris, and he and Alfred Thompson concocted an original *opéra bouffe* on the subject of "Aladdin," which fitted the comic and operatic members of my company. The costumes of the piece were Japanese, designed by Thompson, and it was the first spectacle of that character seen in England on the stage, although it was the craze of the hour in our drawing-room furniture and decorations. It was a great success, and might have been run through the year 1871, but I took it off at Easter to keep faith with Mr. Santley, making a great pecuniary sacrifice, which I never spoke to him about. If I had suggested an adjournment of his contract, he would have consented in a moment. As an example of Alfred Thompson's ingenuity as a costumier, he selected furniture cretonnes for his dresses instead of richly-embroidered

stuffs, and taking white satinette as a ground material, he stencilled this with "smudge," rubbed through a cut pattern in paper, leaving what looked like needlework flowers on the silk surface. Many ladies "in front" were deceived, and wrote to know where they could get "some of that beautiful embroidery."

Though I was opposed to the scheme of the Dramatic College, I gave them a benefit early in the year, for which, amongst other things, I prepared the Trial Scene from Pickwick for the stage, using Charles Dickens's special reading copy. Toole played Buzfuz, Miss Farren Sam Weller, and Stoyle the Judge. The result for the Charity was £192 14s. 0d. Mr. Van Biene, who was then a member of the Gaiety orchestra, came into notice as a violoncello solo player.

A new drama by Mr. Henry J. Byron called *Wait and Hope*, written for Mr. J. L. Toole, was produced on March 1, 1871. In it Miss Violet Cameron made her appearance as a child actress.

I induced my old friend Mrs. Keeley to emerge from her retirement, and give a new value to the now well-known and well-established "Gaiety Matinées." I fully believe, if I had put up *Jack Sheppard*, she would have gladly played her favourite Adelphi character. She appeared at the Gaiety, Saturday morning, March 4th, in Maddison Morton's farce of *Betsy Baker*, and was received with enthusiasm not only by old friends, but by a host of new admirers.

CHAPTER IV.

Lortzing's *Czar und Zimmerman* and Mr. Santley—Balfe's *Letty*—Émile Jonas at rehearsal—Smoking theatres—Saarbrück—The Franco-German war—Soldiers and vagabonds—Treves—First French plays at the Gaiety—After the war, 1871—Boulogne—Amiens—Burning Paris—Road-side graveyards—Baden—Munich—Venice—Illusions dispelled—Cheap Italian opera—The Scala by candlelight—The flying railway.

ONCE more, in April 1871, we turned ourselves into an opera-house, properly so called, and produced Lortzing's popular German opera, *Czar und Zimmerman*, under the title, which I gave it, of *Peter the Shipwright*. Mr. Santley played Peter, the Emperor-ship-builder. I went to Holland and collected old prints to guide us in dressing the piece. Saardam was still Saardam, as in Peter's time, and was not even affected by the Franco-German war. The year 1871 was a busy one. We produced several light operas in the early part of the year—Balfe's *Letty*, and an original work by Émile Jonas on the subject of *Cinderella*, amongst the rest. Jonas was a nervous composer; and while Lütz conducted the rehearsal, Jonas ran along the front row of the stalls from one end of the orchestra to the other. This irritated the instrumentalists, particularly the chief drummer, and at last he threw down his sticks and shouted defiantly, "One blasted * conductor at a time!"

Early in 1871 M. Humbert, the manager of the "Alcazar" Theatre at Brussels, where *Madame Angot* was subsequently produced, expressed a wish to bring his company to London. The "Alcazar" was a

* "Blasted": word made classical by Lowell in the Biglow Papers.

"Smoking Theatre," with a sliding roof, like one or two of our music-halls, but his company was an excellent one, and he was a very liberal and energetic manager. I saw the company at work, and approved of the scheme of a short London French season, but M. Humbert wanted a couple of days before he could complete the agreement. I filled up the time by rushing off to Coblentz. From there I went up the valley to Saarbrück, seeing remains of the Franco-Prussian war (just finished) on every side. At Saarbrück I saw a portion of the French army being sent back to Paris. It was not an heroic sight. They were dirty, drunken, noisy and undisciplined. Without being a prophet or scenting the subsequent excesses of the Commune, I pitied poor Paris! I pushed on to the [illegible], ancient city of Treves, and, after examining the [illegible]n and Roman remains, I was back in Brussels almost before my absence had been noticed. When I told M. Humbert where I had been, he looked upon me as another English "eccentric." The company came over and were well received; such actors and actresses [illegible] Joly, Mario Widmer, Ed. Georges, Charlier, Ginet, Mdlle. Gentien and Mdlle. Paolo Marie being good enough for any Parisian theatre. Their performances included many operas, but Offenbach's *Belle Hélène* was their best.

While the Brussels company were at the Gaiety, and the Gaiety company were in Ireland and elsewhere, I indulged in a little zigzag tour. I went over to Boulogne, and found it free from German occupation, but silent as the grave. Its harbour and custom-houses were idle—paralysed by the German victory. A train took me very slowly to Amiens, where the Prussians in full uniform were swaggering up and down the platforms, with their heavy sabres clanking behind them. Another slow train took me to Paris, having to make a *détour* near Creil, because the rail-

way bridge over the river had been destroyed. The Communistic fires in Paris were still smouldering. The Post Office, the Chamber of Deputies, and the Wine-Market were still harbouring smoking timbers. The People's Theatre—the Porte St. Martin—was a burning ruin—the only theatre destroyed by the people! Funny, but terrible people! The Grand Hotel was full of sand-bags, and was still an hospital. The garden round the *Tour St. Jacques* had been used as a hurried burial-ground for dead soldiers and insurgents, picked up in the streets. Here and there a boot and part of a trouser could be seen sticking up amongst the shrubs and flowers. The stone fronts of the tall houses were pock-marked with bullet-spots.

I went on to Macon—still slowly—to find more Prussians clanking along the platforms. They may not have been insolent, but they looked—victorious. I went on to Switzerland, then back to Baden, then on to Munich, and then across the Brenner to Venice. I was bitterly disappointed with the first view from the railway station, but I did not, like a travelling friend, turn my back upon the place and return by the next train. I saw its beauties, and I saw its defects. I thought of Rogers—poet and banker—and wrote in the visitors' book of my hotel :—

> "Her home is in the sea,
> And the rotten cabbage-leaf clings to the marble of her palaces."

I did not confound the "Bridge of Sighs," as an eminent dramatic friend of mine once did, with the bridge indicated in Hood's celebrated poem. I went to the palace of "Lucrezia Borgia," with my friend Madame Titiens in my eye and Donizetti's saccharine melodies in my ear, and was a little shocked to find it turned into a Turkish Bath (Limited). I went to an opera at the Teatro Malibran in a gondola, which waited for me, and saw my "jolly young waterman"

passed into the pit as a reward for bringing the illustrious gentleman. It was July—a hot July—but I was *not* bitten by mosquitoes. I went back to Milan, where I saw the vast theatre of the Scala, politely lighted up for me by a guide with a guttering penny candle; and I tried to get a sunstroke, and nearly succeeded, by walking in mid-day across an open square without an umbrella. I went on to Turin—the city of alleys—and had a little of my theatrical conceit taken out of me, when I sat at the Teatro Alfieri in a comfortable stall arm-chair and saw a grand opera and a ballet for a shilling. I went back into France on my way home, over and not under Mont Cenis. Fell's flying railway was then running over this portion of the Alps, and giving the sensation of a balloon voyage without the risk of aërial travelling. A very hurried, superficial journey, no doubt, but better than no journey at all for an ignorant cockney.

CHAPTER V.

Walter Montgomery — Shakespeare — *Hamlet* — Westland Marston — Congreve — *Love for Love* — The Wardour Street Drama — Mr. and Mrs. Boucicault — Gilbert and Sullivan's first joint work — A Crystal Palace contract — The Paynes — A curious resemblance — The Prince of Wales's illness — Charles Reade — Letters — *Shilly-Shally* — "Why play trash?" — Reade and Zola — *Drink* — Anthony Trollope.

AFTER the French plays a short season of "legitimate drama," under the direction of Mr. Walter Montgomery, filled up a few weeks while my regular company were on tour, and we even attempted *Hamlet*. I defined the "legitimate drama" broadly as a drama whose authors were dead, and whose copyrights had expired. Mr. Walter Montgomery was an actor-manager, like Shakespeare; but, unlike Shakespeare, he played all the chief characters. Shakespeare contented himself with the "Ghost" in *Hamlet*, and for a very good reason. It gave him two clear hours to look after the money and check-takers. Walter Montgomery was a very good "Hamlet," but "Hamlet" at the Gaiety was like the fly in amber. Later in the year poor Montgomery made an unhappy marriage, and committed suicide.

We dabbled a little in the poetic drama, with the aid of Dr. Westland Marston and Miss Ada Cavendish, and early in November I produced my second deodorised play—Congreve's *Love for Love*. I advertised it by printing the following short history:—

Love for Love, the third comedy written by William Congreve, was originally produced on April 30th, 1695, at the opening of the Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre, a house built by the author, Betterton, Mrs. Barry, and Mrs. Bracegirdle, on the site of the Duke's Theatre in Portugal Row, a locality chiefly known of late years in connection with the

Insolvent Debtors' Court. The original cast of characters stood thus: "Valentine," Betterton; "Ben," Doggett; "Foresight," Sandford; "Tattle," Boman; "Sir Sampson," Underhill; "Scandal," Smith; "Jeremy," Bowen; "Trapland," Trefusis; "Angelica," Mrs. Bracegirdle; "Mrs. Frail," Mrs. Barry; "Miss Prue," Mrs. Ayliff; "Mrs. Foresight," Mrs. Bowman; and the "Nurse," Mrs. Leigh. The comedy was so successful for those days—being performed thirteen times in succession—that Betterton and his brother managers offered the author a whole share in their profits on the sole condition of furnishing them annually with a new play.

Love for Love contains more witty dialogue and variety of character than any of its author's other works; and as Congreve confessedly stands before Vanbrugh, Wycherley, and Farquhar, it may be taken as the best representative work of its period—a period exceedingly rich in English comedy. Much of the "wit" I have, of course, been compelled to cut out, not in deference to the wishes of the Lord Chamberlain, who claims no control over the masterpieces of English dramatic literature, but to satisfy my own sense of decency. Some portion of the dialogue I have also sacrificed to bring the comedy within the limits of an ordinary acting modern play; but there are many people—thankful for small mercies—who will perhaps accept even a mangled version of Congreve in preference to no Congreve at all. Though the construction of *Love for Love* is a little old-fashioned, I have done nothing to it beyond reducing the original five acts to three—treating it with more "reverence" than I was compelled to bestow upon Sir John Vanbrugh's *Relapse*, produced at the Gaiety Theatre in April, 1870, under the title of *The Man of Quality*.

The character of "Ben" in *Love for Love* is interesting as being the first sketch of a British sailor on the English stage—and it is curious to notice that he is not invested with any of that nobleness and generosity so common in his dramatic successors. His first representative, oddly enough, was Mr. Doggett, the actor who is now chiefly remembered by his legacy of a coat and badge, which is annually rowed for on the River Thames, from London Bridge to Chelsea, by six young watermen. This is a perpetual compliment paid to George I. by the actor. The character of "Miss Prue" is interesting as being the original of a long line of stage "hoydens"; and "Old Foresight," though generally considered an obsolete sketch, because he believes in astrology, which has gone out of fashion, is not obsolete as a representative of superstition. The play, though it has had a long rest, has been performed at various times and places during the last two centuries, and notably at Vanbrugh's Theatre in the Haymarket—the predecessor of the Opera House—by a company of women in 1705.

JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

Miss Ada Cavendish was in the cast. "Miss Prue" was represented by Miss Farren, and "Ben" by Mr. Stoyle. The performance was much criticised,

favourably and unfavourably, but I gained publicity and advertised the theatre. I gave this and similar pieces the general name of the *Wardour Street Drama*. *Belle Hélène* in English was the afterpiece.

After an absence of four years from the London stage, Mr. and Mrs. Boucicault appeared at the Gaiety at the end of November. They acted in several of Mr. Boucicault's pieces, and, amongst the rest, in a new drama called *Elfie*, and an Irish version of *La Joie Fait Peur*.

The Christmas piece of 1871 was chiefly remarkable for one thing: it brought Mr. W. S. Gilbert and Mr. Arthur Sullivan together for the first time in a two-act operatic extravaganza called *Thespis*. Musically it suffered a little, owing to the two chief parts being necessarily represented by Mr. Toole and Miss Farren; but it had Miss Loseby, Miss Tremaine, Mdlle. Clary (who remained after the French company left), Mr. Wood, Mr. Sullivan (Arthur's brother), and other vocalists, with a trained chorus, and the Payne family as pantomimists. Though an elaborate two-act piece, it was not offered to the public alone. It was preceded by Byron's drama *Dearer than Life*. The *table d'hôte* at the Gaiety was always ample.

Simultaneously with the production of *Thespis* at the Gaiety, I produced my first pantomime at the Crystal Palace (by contract), on the subject of the "Forty Thieves." It had the advantage of the pick of the Gaiety company (barring Mr. Toole), as the Crystal Palace worked by day and the Gaiety by night. The pantomimists included the Payne family—a host in themselves—and the irrepressible "Turtle Jones," who played the "Policeman." That admirable and decorous pantomimist, Mr. Payne, senior, was shocked by Jones, who threw himself out of a first-floor window, waving his truncheon in the air, and falling as contentedly on his back as if the stage

was the softest feather-bed imaginable. The water cascade, which was the great feature of the transformation scene, was equal to a real "fall" in Cumberland or Westmoreland, and the effect was liberally praised by the press. I may, perhaps, be excused for printing the following letter from Mr. (now Sir) George Grove:—

Crystal Palace.

MY DEAR HOLLINGSHEAD,—I can't go away without writing one line to tell you how very much pleased I am with the way in which you have carried out your contract, so far. It is decidedly the best pantomime we have had for many years, and a credit to both your side and ours. You know me enough to understand how great the relief is to me to find the first day so well over. Many thanks to you for it.

Yours very truly,

Thursday [*Dec* 21*st*, 1871], 6.15 P.M. G. GROVE.

Soon after Christmas we produced, for *matinées* only, Suppé's operetta, *The Beautiful Galatea*, and it was impossible not to be struck with its similarity in story and character to Mr. W. S. Gilbert's Haymarket comedy of *Pygmalion and Galatea*. I drew Mr. Gilbert's attention to the close resemblance. He admitted the fact, but assured me he had never seen or heard of the German work before it appeared at the Gaiety.

A gloom was thrown over the early part of 1872 by the serious illness of the Prince of Wales, and every one (particularly the theatrical profession) was relieved when the crisis was happily over. Thanksgiving Day, February 27, 1872, was a real holiday in London.

When I produced *The Courier of Lyons*, I was brought for a short time into contact with Mr. Charles Reade, and found him a very practical and reasonable author. When he founded his play of *Skilly-Skally* on Anthony Trollope's novel of "Ralph the Heir," he offered it to me, and I gladly accepted it. This brought us more together, and I learnt to know and

appreciate one of the most earnest, singular, and genuine men who ever struck root as an author and a journalist.

Charles Reade's energy and vigour of language were mostly reserved for his books or letters. Personally he was gentleness itself. He would talk of abuses that possibly made his blood boil, and which he wrote about with a force that unquestionably made other people's blood boil, in a calm and measured voice, with no gesticulation, no visible fury, no excitement. He would sit at a table in the "morning room" of the Garrick Club inditing letters against "pirates," and "literary skunks" of all kinds, with a sweet smile upon his face, and a slow and measured penmanship. Never was a volcanic eruption produced with less effort—less explosion. No one who looked at him, and did not know the man, would have imagined he was composing anything but a love letter or a few lines addressed to a child at school. He wrote with broad pens on broad paper with broad

a London theatre for a term—notably the Adelphi, where he produced that powerful and original but not successful play, *Put Yourself in his Place.* Sometimes he had a country theatre, or a country travelling company. He had a keen eye for acting ability, and brought many people to London who were a distinct gain to the profession. The late Mr. Charles Kelly, I think, was one of his discoveries. He watched their points as a horse-dealer would watch the points of a horse, and he had no hesitation in describing these points when he wished to recommend the disbanded members of one of his companies. Here are a few such recommendations, selected from many others, addressed to me. Unlike Charles Dickens, who scrupulously dated his letters, writing the figures in words, Charles Reade invariably left out the year, though he put the month :—

2, Albert Terrace, Knightsbridge,
June 30 [may be 1872 or 1873].

DEAR HOLLINGSHEAD,—The bearer is Miss ——, who has been on tour with me as a characteristic dancer. She has danced a negro dance in the *Wandering Heir*, hornpipe in *Foul Play*, and is said to dance the can-can well. . . . I gave her a guinea a week, and think her cheap.—Yours faithfully, C. READE.

Same address, June 30.

The bearer is Mr. ——, of whom I spoke to you as a remarkable actor of small parts. He also does all utility business, and is baggage man on tour, &c. An invaluable servant in a theatre, with small pretensions.

He took the trouble to write a dozen letters like these to help the people who had helped him, and evidently felt the same interest in the lowest as he did in the highest members of his company.

Shortly after I withdrew *Skilly-Skally*, and was playing another piece, practically with the same company, he wrote in a perfectly friendly way: "The piece you are playing is trash. Why not play *Masks and Faces*, which is not trash?" When I wrote that

I thought my company was hardly capable of doing justice to *Masks and Faces*, he called me an "old fox," offered to bet me a large sum that *Masks and Faces* would draw more money than the "trash" was drawing, and then wrote again a few days afterwards asking if I was offended, and inviting me to dinner.

When I first saw Zola's *L'Assommoir* in Paris I was so struck with the piece, and so convinced that Charles Reade was the one dramatic adapter in England to turn it into English, that I sought him out, and harangued him in a manner that was in ridiculous contrast to his seraphic calmness. I put it to him that the piece ought to have a moral value in the land of pothouses, which it never did, would, or could have in France. I spoke to him about our long lines of dismal streets that would be plunged in darkness if every other house were not a blazing gin-palace; I alluded to our House of Commons, where brewers and distillers, combined with lawyers and railway directors, are the real governors of England, and I spoke disrespectfully of British Finance under which the interest of the National Debt, the burden of a century of cock-a-doodle-dooism, is paid out of the profits derived from national drunkenness. He saw that there were many grains of truth in my bushel of chaff, and the ultimate result was his play called *Drink*—the last dramatic fruit from an old tree—the last dramatic work of a great master.

Shilly-Shally was well played by Toole, Miss Farren, Mr. Maclean, Mr. J. G. Taylor, Mr. William Rignold, etc. It was roughly criticised—so roughly, that Charles Reade brought one or two actions for libel. He was fond of invoking the Law Courts. The dialogue of the play, as distinguished from the dialogue of the novel, was accused of indecency. The *Saturday Review* blamed me, on this ground, for producing it. I replied that I disclaimed

all responsibility, as the Legislature had relieved me from being anything more than a nonentity, by saddling me with an official censor, to whom I had sent the play with the official fee of two guineas, and had, in due course, received the official licence—a certificate of purity. Trollope, when he returned from Australia, appeared to be annoyed that his novel had been dramatised, but Reade said he had asked and obtained his permission. Trollope knew he was legally helpless, but he absolved me from all blame in the matter.

CHAPTER VI.

Charles Mathews—His return to England—A lightning contract—His triumphal reappearance—An after-dinner nap—The gas strike—Dramatic copyright or stageright—Licensed robbery—Agitation—Literary (pen and ink) support—Test case—Failure—Thieves still protected—Royal Commission—Another blue-book—An "idle trade."

ABOUT the middle of 1872 I received a communication from Mr. Charles Mathews, from America, expressing a wish to play at the Gaiety Theatre on his return to England. His son, Willie Mathews, the well-known barrister and Q.C., also called on the same business. I replied that I should be delighted to receive him.

I was in Liverpool when, one morning in July, I received a telegram saying he had arrived, and wished to see me the same afternoon at four o'clock, to make the engagement. I came to town at once by an early express train, and punctually at the time appointed he bounded into my room at the theatre, looking certainly ten years younger than he did before he left England. We wasted very little time in settling details: no agreements were drawn up, no letters asked for or given; a mere verbal contract was taken on both sides. I made a memorandum in a diary, and we both started off in different directions—he to Baden-Baden, and I to Vienna—the same night. We never saw and heard very little from each other till the beginning of October, and on the 7th of that month (1872) he made his first reappearance in England, after his long absence, at the Gaiety Theatre, in *A Curious Case* and *The Critic*. His reception was most sensational. I never

witnessed such a burst of enthusiasm. The one who seemed the least moved by it was the chief actor. He played for ten weeks, going through many of his favourite parts—*Used Up*, *Married for Money*, *Cool as a Cucumber*, *Game of Speculation*, etc.; and although the bulk of the company were sent to the country, as he required very few to support him, the receipts amounted to over £1,000 a week.

Two incidents occurred during this engagement which produced a little excitement. One night Charles Mathews had not arrived at the theatre when it was time for the curtain to rise for his first piece. Many people thought sudden death, and some few said it. The orchestra was started on an "operatic selection," in the middle of which Mathews rushed into the theatre. He had gone to sleep over the fire after his early dinner, and had overslept himself.

The gas strike was the other incident. For two or three nights we were put on a quarter of our proper supply, with the prospect of having no gas at all. The *Times*, Dec. 4th, 1872, said:—

> The management of the Gaiety Theatre had prepared for the worst, and had excellent oil lamps all over the corridors, while "in front" all was ready for a special illumination of a novel character, which it is said will be carried out this evening if any doubt should exist about the supply of gas.

This "special illumination" meant limelight, with which for two nights we lighted up the Strand.

In February 1873, Mr. Toole and myself went into the Law Courts with our copyright case of Toole *v.* Young; Mr. Toole to try and maintain his right in a piece which he had bought of me, founded on a published story of mine, and I to try and amend the law which allows novelists to be pillaged by dramatists without remedy. Our first appearance in the Court of Queen's Bench was a failure. Lord Chief Justice Cockburn seemed to take a pleasure in

uttering the legal dictum that the writer of a story, who had it printed in book or magazine, dedicated that story to the whole world, and for the purposes of the stage it was anybody's property. The following letter states the case :—

DRAMATIC COPYRIGHT (OR STAGERIGHT).

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "DAILY TELEGRAPH."

SIR,—I am much obliged to you for your leader on the subject of dramatic copyright in to-day's paper; but, bad as you have stated the position of the novelist-dramatist to be, I am afraid you have not stated the whole of its badness. If I understand the present law and the ruling of the Lord Chief Justice in the case of Toole *v.* Young rightly, any author publishing a story or novel gives the whole of that story or novel—dialogue, incidents, and characters—to the whole world to dramatise, and secures no exclusive dramatic rights himself by first dramatising his own production. The "original source" (the story or novel) is still open to all dramatic adapters, and no infringement of dramatic copyright will be established unless the adapters use, by design or accident, any phrases, characters, or incidents that are in the original author's play and not in the original author's story or novel. This is the point of law that we shall get a clear and final decision upon by going to the judges in Banco; and if the decision should be against us, I need scarcely say that we shall do our best to get the present law altered. This is not a question that begins and ends with a trifling story of mine that I had almost forgotten: it affects one-half of the dramatic literary property in the kingdom. Mr. Wilkie Collins, Mr. W. S. Gilbert, Mr. Charles Reade, Dr. Westland Marston, Mr. Andrew Halliday, the executors of the late T. W. Robertson, etc., are all in communication with me, and are watching the issue of this trial with considerable anxiety. To quote only one of the letters, I may say that four of Mr. Gilbert's latest and most successful dramas are all dramatic versions of stories he had previously published. It is not so much as a writer that I am now interested in this question. I am a very large dealer in so-called dramatic copyrights, and, in conjunction with Mr. Toole, I believe I am within the facts when I state that our joint expenditure is seldom less than £5,000 a year in this direction.

Concerning Mr. Grattan's letter [the pirate], published in your paper to-day, I can only say that he has done nothing which appears illegal. Seven years after the publication of my story, he goes or is directed to a later copy of the magazine (*Good Words*) in which the original note stating that the story had been dramatised by the author was struck out, doubtless for sound editorial reasons. He made no enquiry as to my published books, in which the story was reprinted with that footnote attached a year after its publication in the magazine, and he made no attempt to find me—a person very easily found—to ask my consent

to the course he proposed to take. He acted according to his supposed legal right, went to the story—the "original source"—took the four characters, the main incident, and two-thirds of the dialogue, adding some alterations of his own, chiefly in details. This course is thoroughly legal in literary matters; but let us suppose a lower case in which no such defence would be admitted. A pickpocket steals a gentleman's pocket-handkerchief without the gentleman's knowledge, and when placed at the bar owns that he took the gentleman's initials out of one corner, put his own initials in another corner, and pleads that he has created a new and distinct property by having the handkerchief considerably embroidered. How would Mr. Knox deal with such a question, having property like a pocket-handkerchief before him, and not a soap-bubble like literature?—Yours, etc.,

JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

Gaiety Theatre, Feb. 26th, 1873.

We were, as usual, given the right to appeal, as there is nothing the Law and the Judges like so well as pugnacious suitors. We appealed, of course, and I began to agitate. By April 21st I was able to publish the following document, containing abstracts of letters addressed to me in answer to my request for "opinions":—

COPYRIGHT REFORM,

AS AFFECTING THE

RIGHT OF STAGE REPRESENTATION OF NOVELS.

Opinions in favour of Securing the Dramatic Rights of Novelists in their own Creations.

GEORGE ELIOT.—"I thoroughly concur in the opinion that the Law of Copyright in relation to the dramatisation of novels ought to be changed, and I shall willingly give my adhesion to any energetic effort towards attaining that end."

LORD LYTTON.—"I heartily sympathise with your efforts, and shall be very willing to co-operate to obtain such an amendment of the Copyright Law as may prevent the unauthorised dramatisation of novels."

WILKIE COLLINS.—"My 'POOR MISS FINCH' has been dramatised (without asking my permission) by some obscure idiot in the country. I have been asked to dramatise it, and I have refused, because my experience tells me that the book is eminently *unfit* for stage purposes. What I refuse to do with my own work, another man (unknown in Literature) is perfectly free to do against my will, and (if he can get his rubbish played) to the prejudice of my novel and my reputation."

TOM TAYLOR.—"I quite agree with you that prior dramatisation by

an author ought to secure his stage property in a story from infringement by another dramatist without his permission."

CHARLES READE.—"I consider it a heartless and wicked act to dramatise a story written by a dramatist, because you must know he wishes to dramatise it himself."

SHIRLEY BROOKS.—"That dramatisation question on which you write is one that ought to be taken up by all of us."

M. E. BRADDON.—"I have written twenty-four novels, many of these have been dramatised, and a few of the dramatic versions still hold the stage. I have never received the smallest pecuniary advantage from any of these adaptations, nor does the law of copyright in any way assist me to protect what appears to be a valuable portion of my copyright, namely the exclusive right to dramatise my own creation."

WATTS PHILLIPS.—"AMOS CLARK was founded on a novel of mine. A thief the other day informed me he had as much right to give *his* version of *my* story as I had *by the law*. Nearly every one of my stories have been dramatised, captured, and conveyed to the CAVE OF ADULLAM and elsewhere. Not a farthing given to me; only when I took up some of my situations (situations created by me), and worked them into a piece, and I was told 'they have been done before.'"

CHARLES MACKAY, LL.D.—"Please include my name among those who desire to co-operate in the reform of the Copyright Laws as affecting the right of stage representation."

WESTLAND MARSTON, LL.D.—"I am warm in the conviction that where a writer creates a property for himself in one branch of fiction, he should not lose it because some one else may be inclined to present its substance with a mere modification of form."

WILLIAM GILBERT.—"I sincerely wish you success in your attempt to prevent the piracy of novels, etc., for theatrical purposes."

FLORENCE MARRYAT.—"One of my novels is at this moment being dramatised against my wishes."

W. S. GILBERT.—"'THE WICKED WORLD,' 'CREATURES OF IMPULSE,' 'ON GUARD,' 'RANDOLPH'S THUMB,' are all dramatic versions of stories I have published."

SIR CHARLES L. YOUNG.—"I shall be very happy to render any assistance in my power in order to secure to authors the rights of property in the product of their own brains."

F. W. ROBINSON.—"The movement, I hope, will result in a re-consideration of the Law of Copyright, as it affects the unauthorised dramatisation of stories, from which the novelist suffers immensely, and without hope of redress."

PALGRAVE SIMPSON, Secretary of the Dramatic Authors' Society.—"You will benefit all authors if you can bring about a change in the Copyright Law as regards novels, tales, and dramas."

I helped to form an Authors' Protection Society, and we succeeded in getting a Royal Commission

appointed, consisting of Lord John Manners, the Earl of Devon, Sir Charles Young, Sir Henry Holland, Sir John Rose, Sir Louis Mallet, Sir H. Drummond Wolff, Sir Julius Benedict, Mr. Daldy, Mr. Froude, Mr. Herschell, Mr. Jenkins, Dr. W. Smith, Mr. Fitzjames Stephen, and Mr. A. Trollope. Our committee comprised Mr. Tom Taylor, Mr. Charles Dickens (junior), Mr. B. L. Farjeon, Mr. Charles Gibbon, Mr. J. Glaisher, F.R.S., Mr. Joseph Hatton, Mr. Edward Jenkins, M.P., Mr. Blanchard Jerrold, Mr. Charles Reade, and Mr. Moy Thomas, who consented to act as Honorary Secretary.

The Commission sat and took long, exhaustive, and varied evidence, and its report, published in 1878, on my point was plain and direct—it advocated the protection of the novelist. I was one of the witnesses.

At midsummer, 1873, I issued the following "Retrospective Review" of the Gaiety Theatre :—

On Saturday night, June 28th, 1873, Mr. Charles Mathews will close his second engagement, and with it will close the fifth season of the Theatre. The Gaiety Theatre, opened December 21st, 1868, has only been closed four weeks during a period of nearly five years; and these four weeks have been more than counterbalanced by ninety-eight morning performances. The Gaiety morning performances have introduced a new principle—that of giving an entertainment distinct from the night programme, and varying at nearly every representation. During the five seasons in question, about one hundred and fifty pieces have been produced.

Amongst the Comedies, Dramas, etc., may be mentioned :—*Dreams, An Old Score, A Life Chase, Uncle Dick's Darling, The Hunchback, The Man of Quality, Poor Nobleman, Wait and Hope, Bachelor of Arts, Courier of Lyons, Doctor Davy, Dot, Paul Pry, Hamlet, Lady of Lyons, Othello, Louis XI., As You Like It, New Way to Pay Old Debts, Honeymoon, Romeo and Juliet, Richard III., Donna Diana, Serious Family, Love for Love, Night and Morning, Elfie, Dearer than Life, Shilly-Shally, Colleen Bawn, Arrah-na-Pogue, John Bull, Good News, The Critic, Used Up, Married for Money, Game of Speculation, Trotty Veck, Sweethearts and Wives, Prisoner of War, The Liar.*

Amongst the Burlesques and Operas Bouffe have been :—*Robert the Devil, Columbus, Linda of Chamouni, Wat Tyler, Princess of Trebisonde, Blue Beard, Aladdin II., Malala, Grand Duchess, Les Bavards, Chanson de Fortunio, Chevaliers de la Table Ronde* (French), *Belle Hélène* (in French and English), *Canard à Trois Becs* (French), *Galatea,*

Cinderella, Thespis, Cox and Box, Ali Baba, Don Giovanni, Martha, etc.; and at the Morning Performances: *Geneviève de Brabant, Fleur de Lys, Isaac of York,* and *Chilperic.*

Amongst the Operas (in English) have been *Beggars' Opera, Betly, Zampa, Fra Diavolo, Peter the Shipwright* (first time in England) *Letty, Guy Mannering, Maritana, Bohemian Girl, Lily of Killarney,* etc.

The Musical Composers represented have been:—E. Jonas, Delibes, Offenbach, Lütz, Adolphe Adam, Donizetti, Hérold, Auber, Hervé, Lortzing, Balfe, Arthur Sullivan, Suppée, Bishop, Wallace, Benedict, etc.

The Authors represented have been:—W. S. Gilbert, T. W. Robertson, Alfred Thompson, John Oxenford, H. J. Byron, George Augustus Sala, Sheridan Knowles, Vanbrugh, Tom Taylor, Charles Reade, Albery, Planché, Gay, Dion Boucicault, Shakespeare, Lord Lytton, Sir Walter Scott, Westland Marston, Congreve, Colman, Reece, Sheridan, Charles Mathews, Douglas Jerrold, Tobin, Massinger, Delavigne, Foote, Farnie, Poole, Kenney, etc.

The Exponents of these pieces have been:—Mr. Alfred Wigan, Mr. John Clayton, Mr. S. Emery, Mr. Henry Neville, Mr. J. L. Toole, Mr. Henry Irving, Mr. J. Eldred, Mr. Hermann Vezin, Mr. Stoyle, Mr. Santley, Mr. Sims Reeves, Mr. William Rignold, Mr. Dion Boucicault, Mr. Charles Mathews, Mr. H. Sinclair, Mr. Lionel Brough, Mr. R. Soutar, Mr. J. G. Taylor, Mr. Maclean, Mr. Aynsley Cook, Mr. Walter Montgomery, Mr. W. Castle, Mr. George Perren, Miss Madge Robertson, Miss E. Farren, Miss C. Loseby, Miss Tremaine, Miss Rachel Sanger, Miss Henrade, Miss Rose Coghlan, Miss Neilson, Madame Florence Lancia, Miss Julia Matthews, Miss Litton, Miss Carlotta Addison, Mrs. Keeley, Miss Dolaro, Miss Blanche Cole, Miss Ada Cavendish, Mlle. Clary, Mrs. Dion Boucicault, Miss Lydia Foote, Miss Fanny Brough, Miss E. Fowler, Mrs. Billington, Miss Annie Sinclair, Miss Lucy Franklein, Mrs. Henry Leigh, and Mdlle. Roseri. The French Company of the Fantaisies Parisiennes, with MM. Mario-Widmer, Jolly, Ed. Georges, Mdlle. Paolo Marie, etc. And at the morning performances, Miss Emily Soldene and the Philharmonic Company, and Mr. E. Righton and the Court Company, etc.

During this period the Gaiety Company has played in Manchester, Sheffield, Preston, Liverpool, Bradford, Dublin, Belfast, Glasgow, Newcastle, Birmingham, Nottingham, Bristol, Leicester, Wolverhampton, Cambridge, Portsmouth, Norwich, Yarmouth, Colchester, Ipswich, Rochester, Lynn, Reading, Bath, Greenwich, Greenock, Sunderland, Leeds, Bolton, etc., etc. And at the London Suburban theatres—Marylebone, Standard, Elephant and Castle, Surrey, Pavilion, Crystal Palace, etc.

JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

A document like this is stiff reading, and only interesting as a theatrical record, but its publication may do a little good by dispelling the illusion that theatrical management—properly so-called—is an idle

trade, and that a manager has nothing else to do but pick his teeth all day, dine with dukes one night and demireps the next, or sit in luxuriously-furnished green-room divans with a ballet-girl on each knee, and unlimited champagne on the table, like a Brummagem Sardanapalus. The work represented by that document would stagger a cotton-spinner or a soap-boiler. It is work that cannot be done by machinery, steam-power, water-power, electric-power, or any scientific agency invented for the service of man. It has to be done by brains, tact, and temper, acting on a multitude of men, women, and children, each one of whom is fearfully and wonderfully human—filled with ambition, vanity, desire to shine, belief in latent or checked ability, pettishness, natural insubordination—the spirit of school-children at a school—liable to be impressed by relatives, friends, enemies, and large and small newspapers; liable to fits of jealousy, with or without foundation; in fact, "*the* profession," as it is called—a heterogeneous collection of actors and actresses. All these delicate parts of a great living, breathing, palpitating machine have to be put together in a way to please that many-headed tyrant—the public; an entity that knows what it wants, and will have it, but refuses to give any sign, remaining dumb and inarticulate, leaving the manager to find his way to light and success, or to stumble in the dark and perish with failure; a public that hates to-day what it worshipped yesterday, and will probably worship again to-morrow. In addition to all this, the manager is brought face to face with authors, artists, and artistic costumiers, with prejudices, fads, theories, obstinacy, determination, taste, or want of taste, and a full and divine belief in their own infallibility. With all this and more to mould and adulterate character, can it be wondered at if a large percentage of theatrical managers become unmitigated humbugs?

CHAPTER VII.

The slap you and put you to bed Act—Bad for the "twins"; worse for the public—Authors and would-be plays—Church rates—"Mr. Smith"—*Bond-fide* letters—Tokens of gratitude—A startling gift—Embarrassing Tzigane.

THE year 1873 was not to close without another conflict with the law and the licensing system. The Siamese twin scheme of the theatre-restaurant and restaurant-theatre was now discovered to be illegal. It was not illegal when it was started in 1868, but it was made illegal in 1873 by an Act passed in 1872—the slap you and put you to bed half-past twelve o'clock closing Act—the Act that treated the London public like children, although it allowed them the full-grown privilege of paying taxes. I wrote the following letter to the *Times* and other papers:—

ACCORDING TO ACT OF PARLIAMENT.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "TIMES."

SIR,—The Gaiety Theatre not being a music-hall licensed by the justices, but a theatre licensed by the Lord Chamberlain, it is unlawful (under the new Licensing Act) for it to communicate with the Gaiety Restaurant, built under the same roof; and the ladies and gentlemen who for the last five years have walked comfortably from their dinners to this theatre, or from this theatre to their suppers, will, on and after Monday next, have to descend a long flight of stairs, pass round a (probably muddy) street, and ascend another long flight of stairs if they wish to combine eating with their amusements. The theatre is liberally supplied with drink under another Act of Parliament.

JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

Gaiety Theatre, March 27th, 1873.

The two magnificent exits and communications with the restaurant on the first and second floors, through which a four-wheeled cab could be driven, had to be

walled up with brickwork two feet thick. Captain Shaw, the chief of the fire brigade, was staggered when he saw my letter, and wrote to the *Times* to say so. I wrote to the Lord Chamberlain disclaiming all responsibility from panic or accident; the Lord Chamberlain sent to the Home Secretary; the Home Secretary said he could not alter an Act of Parliament, and referred to the magistrates; the magistrates said the new Act, unlike the old Acts, gave them no option; and I stuck up a placard on the closed doors, which remained for years, pointing to this triumphal monument of molly-coddling legislation!

Though I had not been long in management—less than five years—I had read or looked at an enormous number of plays which had been sent to me unsolicited by writers anxious to be dramatists. They were of all sizes and all kinds—some utterly hopeless, and some fairly good, but not suited to the theatre or the company. The burlesques, which were our staple commodity, had to be concocted in the theatre, the subject and author being chosen by me, and the piece put into shape at rehearsal. Some of the manuscripts were almost illegible, badly written on bad paper, with dirty water for ink, and only a few were printed. One author sent in three pieces at once in a bundle, with a request for a decision in twenty-four hours. I thought this mode of doing business so original that I hopefully opened the bundle and found three substantial rolls of paper written in shorthand! I wrote to the author—I never kept a secretary—and told him I was not a shorthand writer or reader. He called the next day to fetch his manuscripts, and said I ought to be ashamed to call myself a man of education!

The following correspondence took place on the interesting subject of Church Rates. The writer was the Right Honourable Mr. W. H. Smith:—

151, STRAND,
21 July, 1871.

Mr. Churchwarden Smith presents his respectful compliments to Lionel Lawson, Esq., and begs to inform him that the Church Rate upon the Gaiety Theatre has not yet been paid.

Mr. Smith trusts that L. Lawson, Esq., will kindly forward the amount to Mr. Peters, 11, Cook's Court, Lincoln's Inn, as the Rate is about being closed.

To which the following answer was sent:—

GAIETY THEATRE,
July 27, 1871.

Mr. Hollingshead (who is responsible for rates and taxes, not Mr. Lawson) presents his compliments to Mr. Churchwarden Smith, and begs to decline paying Church Rates. Mr. Hollingshead is surprised that the Church should wish to draw any portion of its support from such an institution as the Theatre. Mr. Hollingshead in this case can only compare the Church to a Government which abuses, despises, and fetters public-houses, while it consents to draw one-third of the National Income from National Drunkenness.

Amongst many amusing letters that I received I only preserved a few, which were published some years ago in a magazine. As they are Gaiety records, they will bear reprinting. No. 1 is from a gentleman inquiring about a play:—

To the manager of Giacty, dear Sir, Some weaks back Their was Two Men Came to me in a bear-house over London Bridge Concerning a play the called the proofit of the North it whould be a pleasure to me to know if it Took well if it was played at your place The Spoke to me about the Libertys I told them the must Leave it to P——— W——— I was told he was in Liverpool at the Time it whould be pleasure to me if I could get to know anything about him as I Think he will remember his old friend T——— I will enclose you my Adress I shall be greatly Oblidge if you whould forward me one of the book of the plays if it is not a riten one please to send me a copy Yours Truly ———

No. 2 was from a young lady of some little education determined to go on the stage:—

Mr. Hollingshead,
Sir,

twice I have tried to come and see you but have been stopt My mother says do you Know if you go on the stage you will be ruined it is a wicked life Then I asked her why is it I can learn poetry so fast

and why have I got such a voice if I am not to use them and there are good people on the stage they talk of taking my Byron and Shakespeare from me and they say I should only be Ballet girl and they know I should not like that. I dare say I shall be a long time befor I can post this. I am all on thorns while writing. I shall come as soon as I get a chance for the more they talk the worse it seems to make me. (Initials.)

[This was the first and last communication from my unknown correspondent.]

From a gentleman of limited education who wishes to go on the stage:—

Mr. Hollingshead,

Dear Sir,

I wrote to you last year to ask you if you Could Find Me an Inexperiance Part in Your Berlesque.

but I wrote rather late and you had Compleated all Your Arrangements I have Easy hours From 10 till 5.30 and should like Very much to see how I should like the Stage as I am sure I am gifted with it. I also thought a Xmas Piece Would be the Means of Bringing My Tallent out. Any parts I would Take as I should not be able to be at the Afternoon Performance. I leave all to Your Superior Knowledge & I feel sure you will find me a part if ever so simple for the First.

No. 3 was from two young ladies of more limited education, who also wished to go on the stage:—

Dear Sir,

I write these few lines to you hoping to find you well, as it leaves me at present. I want to know if you do want a young lady about seventeen for to learn to be a actress, and please to write and tell me how much it would be a week if I were to learn or if you would like I would come & be learn if you would buy me clothes and eating. So please to write back and tell me whether you do or not. I enclose a portrait it is my portrait I enclose but you need not send it back without you like please to write back by return of post, but we cannot come till after Christmas. So now I must conclude at present from

---

An exactly similar letter came from another young lady, in the same town at the same time. The letters being acknowledged, produced the following reply:—

Dear Sir,

I write these few lines to you hoping to find you in good health as it leaves me at present. And we receive your letter and was very glad to hear from you. And we want to know if you can sent we any address's of theatres or Concert Halls or if you could get we a place

again July. And if you cant give we any address we want to know if you would Learn we for a fortnight for nothing at all we have seen plays & we could play bits of them. So now I must Conclude &c.

These young ladies eventually got an engagement in a new theatre, in an important northern city; they made the acquaintance of a young man—a soldier out of the Coldstreams (at least, I gather so from the writing, which is more than curious), who gave me an excellent character—they applied for a very small loan; they wanted to know if there was any number on the door of a lady, whose name, in the letter, was not to be deciphered; they hoped I was not offended, and they concluded as usual.

Without posing as a particularly charitable or amiable person, I have no doubt that during a somewhat long and active public career I have, like many more managers, been occasionally kind to humble members of my company, and, like many more managers, have been rewarded with various tokens of gratitude. In my case, in two or three instances, these tokens have been either peculiar, startling, or embarrassing.

The first peculiar token of gratitude came to me from a female chorus singer, who was neither young nor beautiful. She was a member of my company in my old Alhambra days, and possessed a contralto voice like the deep notes of a church organ. Mr. Arthur Chappell was so struck with her singing that he was half inclined to take her for the Monday "pops." If he had done this, he might probably have obtained the token; as it was it came to me. It was an engraved portrait of Edmund Kean, certified to be the best likeness of the great tragedian in existence, with an autograph rendered yellow by age, and a letter throwing a little light upon "Mr. and Mrs. Carey, of Richardson's Booth, Bart'lemy Fair," the supposed parents of the dead actor.

The next token was more startling. During my long management of the Gaiety Theatre I had an opportunity of aiding a female "cleaner" who was stricken with illness and poverty at the same time. On her return to the theatre I received a message from her, sent diffidently through the housekeeper, expressing a wish to give me "something" in return for my supposed kindness. This something, I was assured, was a thing of no great pecuniary value, quite useless to the owner, though it had been "in her family" for several years. After some little hesitation I consented to receive the token, and it came. It was an antique mystery beyond my limited learning and comprehension. I consulted the British Museum and other authorities, who solved the problem as to what the token was, but not the mystery as to its preservation and its descent into the hands of a Gaiety "cleaner." It was a gnostic gem of the 2nd century—1,700 years old—an oval piece of deep purple jasper, about the superficial size of a shilling, having an engraved invocation to some supreme being, composed in Chaldee, Zend, and old Greek. I wrote to a great expert on the subject, and received the following polite reply:—

From the Rev. R. H. CAVE,
Wolverton Rectory, Basingstoke.

Your gem is of the 2nd century, and is of the Abrasax type. The formula is one occasionally found on gnostic gems of that period, and is a mixture of Zend, Chaldee, and Greek, containing an invocation which begins, "Blessed be the King of Kings, the Eternal Sun Abrasax and Zurutel, etc., etc." There is a similar gem in the British Museum, but the finest talisman known of the kind was in the Herz Collection on a large garnet. It is an interesting subject and one not very common. I presume the stone is a cornelian, or perhaps a jasper.

The cutting of these mystic words was as clear and sharp as if it had just come from the hands of the engraver, and the waxen impressions could be read without glasses. This gem, no doubt, had been used

frequently as a charm by the Gnostic priesthood, rubbed, like Aladdin's lamp, to "call up spirits from the vasty deep," who doubtless came in a way best known to the rubbers. Apart from any mystic value it may have been supposed to possess, apart from any superstitious halo that may have hovered over it, it was undoubtedly 1,700 years old, and one of the only four similar gems known to exist in Europe. Its commercial value was only three or four pounds; its sentimental value unlimited. What must its history have been as it floated for so many centuries of time down the endless river of eternity? How many priests and emperors must have treasured it, in passing, before it came into the hands of a Gaiety cleaner, and through her into the possession of a Gaiety manager?

The next token was not so much a token as a demonstration—a grateful demonstration of the most embarrassing kind. A small body of instrumentalists—a little orchestra of the Tzigane kind—came to London to seek an engagement, and gave a semi-private exhibition of their powers at a small public gallery. They came from some part of Roumania, and spoke no language but their own, and they came without an interpreter. The charm of their playing was its unbridled spirit—its undisciplined "go," and as long as they confined themselves to dance music and national airs they were quite unrivalled. I took an interest in them. I got them a bad interpreter from a polyglot settlement near Whitechapel, placed them on the free list of one or two festive theatres then under my control, and obtained them admission to the Alhambra and other temples of variety. Probably one or two "society" engagements were due to my recommendation, and as far as I could understand the interpreter, who was occasionally very incoherent, I had earned their eternal respect and gratitude.

A year or two after this I happened to be in Paris with some friends (theatrical managers often happen to be in Paris), when, passing a large café on the Boulevards, my ear was struck with the strains of dance music played in the Tzigane style, and I entered the place with my party. At the end of the room, on a slightly raised platform, were my Roumanian friends in the full swing of a German waltz, which they were playing *con molto rallentando*. The moment they saw me taking a seat at one of the little tables their music suddenly ceased, they doffed their military caps, and plunged at once into a wild wailing tune that was evidently intended to be the English National Anthem. I was so much amused at our old friend "God save the Queen" being served up like this, with Tzigane sauce, that, until my companions drew my attention to the fact, I was not aware that this was a musical demonstration in my honour, and that the anthem was being dashed at out of respect to my beloved country. Luckily, the café was not very crowded, so that, after leaving a good allowance of Strasburg beer for the band, I escaped without much trouble from the "ovation."

A week after this, when the weather got warmer, I went into a public garden in the Champs Elysées, where several hundred people were seated at a café concert. The performers on the stage at the moment were my Roumanian worshippers, and, although I was at the back of the crowd, the eagle eye of one of the players discovered me. He communicated the news to his companions, and in an instant the caps were pulled off, the National Anthem was once more in full swing (this time a little more like the real thing), and I was once more flying from the concert.

A few days after this I received an invitation to an "at home" at the offices of the *Figaro* newspaper—a paper celebrated for its social hospitality. I arrived

early, and again encountered my Roumanian friends, this time waiting for their "turn" in a small anteroom. Without stopping to enquire what entertainment was going on in the chief *salon*, they again burst forth with the familiar tune, winding up with a peculiar vocal yell, which I understood afterwards was meant for "Hip, hip, hurrah!" I had no alternative left but to explain the situation to my host, and apologize for what sounded very much like a disturbance. Later in the evening, through the medium of a better interpreter than they had in London, I obtained a cessation of these well-meant hostilities, on the ground that if what had happened came to the knowledge of the British Ambassador, I should be sent back to England without delay, and beheaded on Tower Hill for high treason.

CHAPTER VIII.

George Conquest—G. H. Macdermott—Miss Violet Cameron—Robert Reece—F. C. Burnand—More manifestoes—My real position and business—Charles Mathews—Comic opera—A little combination—Phelps, Toole, and Mathews—The *Hypocrite* and *John Bull*—Henry J. Byron—Reprints—*Madame Angot* again—Legislative tinkering—*Lad Astray*—Lecocq's *Cent Vierges*.

WHAT was called the sixth season of the theatre began in July 1873, with an acrobatic drama founded on a Manx legend, in which Mr. George Conquest sustained the chief character. Mr. G. H. Macdermott, who afterwards became a great star of the music-halls, played with him; and Miss Violet Cameron, described by the *Morning Post* as "a child of engaging grace, who plays very prettily," made her first appearance, under her own name, at the Gaiety.

Mr. Reece had now become the chief purveyor of burlesque for the theatre. He was a quick worker, very modest, very amiable, and very clever. He worked with me and for me for years, and might almost be described as my stock dramatic author.

Mr. F. C. Burnand, an old friend, afterwards to become editor of *Punch*, gave me about this time his valuable aid. He began with a slight burlesque called *Antony and Cleopatra*, the first of a long series of pieces in which in numbers he distanced all his competitors. Like Reece, Burnand was a most pleasant author to have in a theatre, and, successful or unsuccessful (he was generally the latter), he was always cheerful. I was not a moping manager, and my policy was pretty well represented by the saying of "one down and the other come on." I was supposed

in "the profession" never to be thoroughly happy unless the Gaiety stage was occupied either with a *matinée* or a rehearsal. The *matinées* were sometimes very much like rehearsals. I was simply an "industrious apprentice," and did not pay a heavy rent—the heaviest, at that time, in London, for the size of the house—to keep the theatre closed like a mausoleum.

Mr. Burnand signalised his first connexion with the theatre by taking my place in the *rostrum* and publishing the following characteristic manifesto:—

TO THE PUBLIC.

It may be as well at the commencement to explain the heading of this address. "To the public!" is not an anti-temperance party cry, signifying "To the Tap!" nor is it to be taken as indicating the shortest route to the nearest place of Refreshment. It simply means that this manifesto is an address to the Public, my own particular, very particular, but still indulgent and generous Public, at whose bar I place myself on "this (to me) momentous occasion."

I have long been convinced, though I have never before acted upon it—it being totally against the letter and spirit of British Justice that a trial should follow a conviction—I say I have long been convinced, that a piece, to be successful, should appeal to all the senses: *i.e.*

To the Eyes, with Spectacles;

To the Ear, with the Drum;

To the Hands, by a revival of the palmy days of the Drama;

To the Mouth, for if it is not to the public Taste it will never be in everybody's Mouth;

To the Nose, so that Noses may not be turned up at my effort to please. It is most important to study the Public Nose, as many people are led by it, and all follow it.

The present subject, *Antony and Cleopatra*, "lends itself"—no necessity, therefore, to apply to a lending library—"in an eminent degree" to this treatment.

It was clear to me, apropos of an appeal to the Nose, which must be a remarkable feature in any Roman Piece, that "a-bridging" was indispensable.

This task I have entrusted to Mr. F. C. Burnand, who has "cut down" his own play himself, in the hope that it may thereby avoid being cut-up by anybody else, and he has so reduced it as to have left it at least a mere *reductio ad absurdum*.

The patrons of this Theatre will be deeply gratified and highly pleased to learn that THE UNITIES (and also the PROPERTIES) have been strictly preserved. Without unities there can be no peace.

The Piece has engaged not only the PENCIL, but also the CHARCOAL, the BRUSHES, and the COLOURS of that Eminent Artist, Mr. * * * * * *, who has given us his view of the subject.

Mr. Toole will not add one single word of his own or of any one else's to the original text. I have no more to say, and, privately and confidentially I may add to the Public, I do not know why I have said this much, seeing that I am generally so uncommunicative that people are accustomed to remark about me that "the Manager of the Gaiety is silent because it's 'All-in's-head' and not 'Chatter-tongue.'"

JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD, his mark ×

GAIETY THEATRE, STRAND, W.C.

My defence for manifestoes like this was the title of the theatre. Our *soufflé* productions were often treated with a severity of criticism quite exceptional at the present day, the standard of judgment ignoring the *horse-collar*—my trade sign, if I had any—and often testing us by the loftiest canons of dramatic art. Our butterflies were often not only broken on the wheel; they were smashed with the full force of a Nasmyth hammer. If I objected to any of these draconian judgments, it was as a showman, not as an individual. I was like John Wilkes, as he told George the Third at the Mansion House: he was never a Wilkesite; in other words, I was never a Gaietyite. I saw to every detail at rehearsal, and after that I left the productions to my public.

I was successful. I stamped a distinct character on the house, which it still retains. To describe my position in Rabelaisian terms, like a publican, I was nearly putting over my stage-door—"John Hollingshead, licensed dealer in legs, short skirts, French adaptations, Shakespeare, taste, and the musical glasses."

Charles Mathews' second engagement, after he had made a long country tour—for he hated to be idle—was for five weeks in the summer of 1873, followed

by five weeks in the autumn of the same year, when he played *The Liar*, *Patter* versus *Clatter*, *Used Up*, *Mr. Gatherwool*, *Married for Money*, £1,000 *a Year*, *Cool as a Cucumber*, *Aggravating Sam*, and *Little Toddlekins*. This engagement, from a money point of view, was nearly as successful as the first one.

La Fille de Madame Angot—the musical piece of the day—had been so well done by Miss Emily Soldene and Mr. Charles Morton's Company at the Philharmonic Theatre at Islington, that I had them all down for six weeks, using the Gaiety band and chorus. The version used was Mr. Farnie's. The experiment was so successful that at the end of the term, having made other arrangements, I took the Opéra Comique Theatre in the Strand with Mr. Morton, and together we continued the "run" of the opera for several months. It made a reputation for Lecocq, the composer, which quite overshadowed Offenbach's for a time, but Lecocq had not the "staying power" of his master, and never quite equalled his Brussels work, although he was taken willingly into the arms of Paris.

Having nine days vacant before Christmas, I determined to make a *coup de théâtre*. I called it privately "the nine days' wonder." I had engaged Mr. Phelps, principally for matinées; and as I was ending the first of my short Gaiety leases, the idea occurred to me to do it with becoming splendour. This time it was a combination of men, rather than of costume and scenery. My plan was to get Phelps, Toole, and Mathews, with Lionel Brough (then a member of my company), Hermann Vezin and others, to act together in *The Hypocrite* and *John Bull*. I had great difficulty in carrying out my plan, as the "star" system, which annoyed Dickens, had firmly taken the place of strong casts, and I met with much good-natured but determined opposition from two of

the principal actors. Toole wrote to me from the country under the impression that I had lost faith in him as an individual attraction; Charles Mathews consented unwillingly, but warned me that I was destroying his value as a lonely star—a value in which I was as much interested as he was; and Phelps consented without saying much, but enquired afterwards from Toole the meaning of my policy, taking, to some extent, the same view as Mathews. It was not with me a question of money. I gave Phelps what he asked—£100 a week—this amount was, at that time, Toole's regular salary, and it was Charles Mathews' payment when he was not on sharing terms. My judgment as to the attraction of the novel combination was correct. All the seats that could be booked in the theatre were sold for the nine nights a month or two in advance, and when the time came I had to displace the band and turn the orchestra into stalls.

Bickerstaffe's *Hypocrite*—a version of Molière's *Tartuffe*—formed the bill for the first six nights, Mr. Toole playing "Maw-worm," and Mr. Phelps "Dr. Cantwell," one of his great parts; Miss Farren was "Charlotte." It was in this piece at a Gaiety matinée, some time afterwards, with Mr. Phelps, that Mr. Compton made what proved to be his last appearance on the stage, in the character of "Maw-worm." The remaining three nights were devoted to Colman's comedy of *John Bull*—a thorough green-room piece, written originally to fit every member of the Covent Garden Company in 1803. The following was the Gaiety cast of 1873:—

Job Thornberry	Mr. Phelps.
Hon. Tom Shuffleton	Mr. Charles Mathews.
Dennis Brulgruddery	Mr. Toole.
Peregrine	Mr. Hermann Vezin.
Dan	Mr. Lionel Brough.
Sir Simon Rochdale	Mr. John Maclean.

FRANK ROCHDALE	Mr. CHARLES NEVILLE.
JOHN BURR	Mr. ROBERT SOUTAR.
Mr. PENNYMAN	Mr. E. BUTLER.
SIMON	Mr. DALTON.
MARY THORNBERRY	Miss CARLISLE.
Mrs. BRULGRUDDERY	Mrs. LEIGH.
Lady CAROLINE BRAYMORE ...	Miss ELEANOR BUFTON.

We opened 1874 with Dickens's Christmas Story, the *Battle of Life*, adapted by his son, Mr. Charles Dickens, junior, and the first burlesque—the beginning of many—which Mr. Henry J. Byron wrote for the Gaiety. It was called *Guy Fawkes*. The dresses, as usual, were designed by Alfred Thompson.

H. J. Byron had his own peculiar manner of rehearsing, which was to write anything into the piece that was wanted on the spur of the moment, and leave the task of putting everything together to the actors, the stage manager, the musical director, and the manager. He would come late, make jokes on all subjects in stage corners, stroke his long black moustache in a contemplative way, and seize the first opportunity of creeping out of the theatre unobserved, as he knew all the exits and entrances. His chief amusement was to "fancy" houses and take them. He often had as many as three on his hands at one time. As he could only furnish and live in one, this sometimes made him difficult to find on an emergency. He was quite a genius in his way, and the best abused dramatic author of his generation, and the most popular and successful. He was a quiet, gentlemanly companion, and his jokes came to him without effort. The principal complaint made against him by his critics was that he wrote and produced pieces too rapidly. The same argument would have applied to Alexandre Dumas and Lopez de Vega.

I had not altogether deserted my handicraft—literature and journalism—and in June 1874, three

volumes of my "Miscellanies" were published by Messrs. Tinsley Brothers. My previous books, "Under Bow Bells," "Odd Journeys," "Underground London," "Rubbing the Gilt Off," "Rough Diamonds," and the "Historical Introduction to the International Exhibition of 1862," had become my own property, and I selected many of the papers and stories from these books for the three volumes. "Ragged London in 1861" was left untouched. During my lesseeship of the Gaiety, I issued "Plain English" and "Footlights"—two single volumes of reprints; when I was connected with the Niagara Panorama, I published another volume of reprints, called "Niagara Spray," and during my second connection with the Alhambra, a small book, elaborately illustrated, called "The Story of Leicester Square."

After we had produced a number of pieces to suit Mr. Phelps, legitimate and non-legitimate, including "Rob Roy," with Bishop's music (unequalled for melody), Mr. Charles Mathews came back in May 1874, for his third engagement of seven weeks, in which he appeared only in his old characters. This third engagement of Charles Mathews compelled me to find house room for my *opéra bouffe* company, and I therefore took the Globe Theatre for a few weeks, and opened it with the then popular *Madame Angot*. If I had been dealing in comic operas a few years earlier, and had trusted to the information of Mr. Augustus Harris (the father of Sir Augustus), I might have bought the acting and publishing rights of this opera when it was first produced in Brussels for a few hundred pounds, and this investment would probably have returned me fifty thousand.

The internal communication between the restaurant and the theatre, which I had made by shifting the iron-gate of the theatre a few yards inwards up the passage, and cutting pass-doors right and left in the

neutral portico, was legalised by Parliament. I quote the *Standard* of June 17, 1894:—

Mr. Goldney then moved that "Section 9 of the principal Act shall not prohibit an internal communication between any licensed premises and any theatre only authorised as such by letters patent of Her Majesty, or by licence of the Lord Chamberlain."

Mr. Cross accepted the amendment, which was agreed to.

Mr. Goldney offered, and Mr. Cross accepted, with creditable promptitude, an amendment doing away with the absurdly anomalous state of the law by which a staircase communication between a restaurant and a theatre, under the same roof, is absolutely interdicted. The law might have flourished for a century but for the eager zeal with which the Middlesex magistrates enforced it in the case of two of the West-end theatres. There was a kind of grotesque tyranny in blocking up the staircase and compelling ladies dining with their friends at the restaurant to go down into the muddy streets in order to enter the theatre. We congratulate the Home Secretary on the alacrity with which he lent his co-operation in wiping out this stupid and vexatious law.

The two West-end theatres alluded to were the Gaiety and the Criterion. In the case of the Gaiety, the two feet brick party walls were never removed,

From comedy-drama in the autumn of the same year we went back to comic opera, and selected Lecocq's *Cent Vierges*, produced under the title of the *Island of Bachelors*. Mr. J. L. Toole had gone to America, and, although he played his "farewell performance" at the Globe, I assisted in getting him up a farewell banquet, and a chairman in the person of Lord Rosebery. The Gaiety company was strengthened for this piece by Mr. Arthur Cecil and the return of Mr. Charles Lyall. Mr. J. G. Taylor, Mr. Maclean, Mr. Ludwig, Miss Alice Cook, Mrs. Leigh, Miss Loseby, and Miss Farren completed the cast. The performance, even by musical critics, was considered excellent, thanks to the care and ability of Herr Meyer Lütz, who passed his time pleasantly and profitably in the Strand, while his brother, the Prime Minister of Bavaria, was having his lifelong controversy with Dr. Döllinger. During the "run" of this comic opera, Miss Kate Munroe, coming from America, made her first appearance in England, and became a member of the company.

CHAPTER IX.

The theatrical disease—*Plica Napoleonica*—The Holborn Amphitheatre—The Strand—Opéra Comique—The *Merry Wives of Windsor* at the Gaiety—Phelps, Sullivan, Algernon Swinburne, and Shakespeare—"Falstaff without stuffing"—Macready's temper—Phelps and Mrs. John Wood—Phelps' portrait at the Garrick, by Mr. Forbes Robertson—His latter-day travels.

WE now come to Christmas, 1874, when I had one of my worst attacks of that theatrical disease, to which I have given the name of *Plica Napoleonica*. I had had several premonitory symptoms, but the disease did not show itself in its full virulence until late in December. Not content with the Gaiety, which, as my records have shown up to now, was not by any means a Castle of Indolence, but an empire on which the sunlight was never allowed to set, I must take the "Amphitheatre" in Holborn, originally built as a circus, then turned into a theatre on its road to become a horse repository, and I must also take the Opéra Comique Theatre, in the Strand, which I had already tried as a comic opera house. My only defence is that I did not neglect the Gaiety. Having Mr. Phelps as my principal actor, I decided to put burlesque on one side for a time, and to produce the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, although it did not contain the best of the Falstaffs invented by Shakespeare. It was written "to order" for Queen Elizabeth, which may account for much. I cast the piece as follows, obtaining some of the actors and actresses with difficulty:—

Sir JOHN FALSTAFF	Mr. SAMUEL PHELPS.
Mr. FORD...	Mr. HERMANN VEZIN.
Sir HUGH EVANS	Mr. KIGHTON.
Mr. PAGE	Mr. BELFORD.

FENTON	Mr. FORBES ROBERTSON.
DR. CAIUS	Mr. ARTHUR CECIL.
Master SLENDER	Mr. J. G. TAYLOR.
Justice SHALLOW...	Mr. JOHN MACLEAN.
HOST of the Garter	Mr. GRESHAM.
PISTOL	Mr. SOUTAR.
BARDOLPH...	Mr. BRADSHAW.
SIMPLE	Mr. LEIGH.
ROBIN	Miss MAUDE BRANSCOMBE.
Mrs. PAGE...	Mrs. JOHN WOOD.
Mrs. FORD	Mrs. ROSE LECLERCQ.
ANNE PAGE	Miss FURTARDO.
Dame QUICKLY	Mrs. LEIGH.

Alfred Thompson designed the dresses, and Messrs. Grieve, Gordon, and Harford painted the scenery. The Windsor Forest scene was by Mr. Grieve. I got my friend Mr. Arthur Sullivan (now Sir Arthur) to compose special music for the play, and I gave Mr. Algernon Swinburne a commission to write the following song, which I took the liberty of interpolating in the text :—

Love laid his sleepless head
On a thorny rose bed ;
And his eyes with tears were red,
And pale his lips as the dead.

And fear, and sorrow, and scorn,
Kept watch by his head forlorn,
Till the night was overworn,
And the world was merry with morn.

And Joy came up with the day,
And kissed Love's lips as he lay ;
And the watchers, ghostly and grey,
Fled from his pillow away.

And his eyes at the dawn grew bright ;
And his lips waxed ruddy as light—
Sorrow may reign for a night,
But day shall bring back delight.

This was set to music by Mr. Arthur Sullivan, and sung by Miss Furtardo.

The revels round Herne's Oak were performed by a trained band of singing boys, who did justice to Sullivan's music, which is now a concert classic.

This was Mr. Phelps' first night engagement of any duration at the Gaiety, excepting the nine nights before alluded to in December, 1873, when he appeared in the combination of Phelps, Toole, and Mathews. As in the case of Mr. Charles Mathews, we had no long and precise written agreements, but we understood and trusted each other. From December, 1873, till the day of his lamented death, he considered himself, more or less, engaged to me, and never thought of any public appearance without consulting me.

When I asked him to play Falstaff—an arduous part, because of the "stuffing," for an actor of threescore—I did all I could to make him comfortable. Fortunately, Mr. Hermann Vezin knew and recommended an "anatomical tailor," who made a Falstaffian body and stomach inflated like a balloon, which enlarged and yet fitted the figure, and which could be carried by an infant. For the first time he played Falstaff without physical exhaustion. His drink while acting was beef-tea, although he was not

green-room, and entered pleasantly into all the little amusements of the place. I instituted a comic fine of half-a-crown for anyone heard quoting Shakespeare in any other part of the building except the stage, and once or twice Phelps was caught, not, perhaps, on the most trustworthy evidence; but he paid his fine cheerfully, and helped to drink the punch to which the money was devoted. He liked Mrs. John Wood, "because he had got something to wrestle with."

One result of his Gaiety engagement was that he was induced to come a little out of his domestic retirement at Canonbury. I persuaded him to become a member of the Garrick Club, which ought to have paid him the compliment of making him an honorary member long before he came under my horse-collar management. Mr. Forbes Robertson, who, like Mr. Weedon Grossmith, is as distinguished as an artist as he is as an actor, had painted a nearly full-length portrait of Phelps as Cardinal Wolsey during the time they were acting together at the Gaiety. I gave the artist his price for this picture, which the Garrick members (myself amongst the number) afterwards bought by subscription, and hung up in the club in a post of honour amongst many "old masters," and several advertising pictures.

Mr. Arthur Cecil persuaded him to join in a continental tour, as, with the exception of his professional visits to Berlin and Dresden, he had never been out of his own country. He thought Paris was the best "stage-managed" city he ever saw, or hoped to see—a very happy expression—and he could not speak of the sublime beauty of the Corniche Road between Nice and Genoa without swearing. Though a pious man, he allowed himself the indulgence of a few Cromwellian oaths.

Amongst other parts which he played at the Gaiety were Sir Peter Teazle, Bottom the Weaver, Jacques,

Lord Ogleby, Richelieu, etc. His mind was very active, and he was always ready to study a new part. At one time he thought of playing Bill Sikes in a proposed version of "Oliver Twist," by Andrew Halliday. If he had been ten or fifteen years younger, he would probably have taken a West-end theatre, and repeated the experiment which he carried out so nobly at Sadlers' Wells. He had no Conservative prejudice against anything new, and the last time he was within the walls of a playhouse was at the Gaiety Theatre.

CHAPTER X.

Playing in the wilderness—A new and original *Tony Lumpkin*—Mr. and Mrs. Kendal—A melodramatic failure—French Opéra Comique—Charles Mathews again—*My Awful Dad*—Mr. Gladstone—Mr. Toole's return from America—Signor Rossi and Drury Lane—In Paris—Sir Thomas Henry and Herman Merivale—My opinion in the *Times*—The little Charing Cross Theatre *v.* Drury Lane—Chatterton defends our Star.

WHILE the Gaiety was devoted to Shakespeare, served up with Sullivan and Swinburne sauce, to say nothing of Hollingshead impudence, I did the best, according to my lights, for my public at the Holborn Amphitheatre. First of all I made the theatre comfortable, or as comfortable as I could make it without rebuilding it. I sent in a good band, chorus, and ballet, and a pantomimic and operatic company. We produced *Cinderella*, Rophino Lacy's musical drama, adapted from Rossini's *Cenerentola*, and with music chiefly Rossini's, but mixed with Donizetti and Bellini. Miss Farren I had sent to Manchester, but my company contained Mr. Charles Lyall, Mr. E. Cotte, Miss Rose Lee, Miss Kate Munroe, Miss Jenny Pratt, Mr. Ludwig, Mr. Forrester, Mr. J. L. Hall, Miss Loseby, Mr. John Dauban, and a host of pantomimic and music hall "talent." The entertainment was liberal, but the support was meagre. The most depressing fact was the steadiness of the receipts. They were low, but they were steady. Nothing seemed to affect them. I reduced the expenses about £50 a night, and tried a version of Beaumont and Fletcher's *Maid's Tragedy* on the audience. The receipts were still painfully steady. I gave the experiment up, not

in despair, but with disgust. I had found my first Moscow.

At the Opéra Comique—a smaller theatre in the Strand, and not in Holborn—I adopted a "legitimate" policy. My battle-horses were Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, with Mr. Ryder, Mrs. Buckingham White, and a sound, if not brilliant, company. We began with the *Lady of Lyons*, and followed this up with *She Stoops to Conquer*, giving matinées at the Gaiety of *As You Like It*. At the Opéra Comique, in *She Stoops to Conquer*, I presented Mr. Arthur Cecil in the part of Tony Lumpkin. He gave a new reading of the character, not quite as juicy as Mr. Buckstone's, but having new features of his own. It was no longer Tony Lumpkin—lout and stable lounger; it was his mother's darling, Anthony Lumpkin, Esq., heir-at-law of the Squire, future J.P. and churchwarden, future landed proprietor, and possible Member for his county in the House of Commons. Mr. Arthur Cecil had a busy time with me, but his old "governor," German Reed, said it was the best thing that could have happened to him. I gave him no time to get rusty. Later on we shifted *As You Like It* from the Gaiety to the Opéra Comique. Mr. Kendal was Orlando, Mrs. Kendal was Rosalind; Mr. Hermann Vezin, Jacques; Mr. Maclean, Adam—Shakespeare's part, and another part giving plenty of time for an actor-manager to look after "the front of the house"—and Mr. Arthur Cecil was required, with less than six months' rehearsal, to play Touchstone, and very well he did it. Arthur was like a good many more people: he wanted someone, friend or manager, or both, to make up his mind for him.

At the end of March 1875, I made an unsuccessful attempt to introduce a new Parisian melodrama (in English), called *Rose Michel*, to London at the Gaiety. It was carefully done, and in it a new and promising

actor, since famous, named Osmond Tearle, made his first appearance in London. It was a failure, and the following remarks from the *London Figaro*, April 21, 1875, may be quoted with perfect propriety :—

> Those who are inclined to make much of the failure of poor *Rose Michel* at the Gaiety may be reminded that this is about the first "cropper" that the management here has ever come during its seven years' career; and this career is by long odds the most adventurous in the way of new pieces that any house can show. By the bye, too, the sudden production of *London Assurance* and the *Tempest*, when the final fiasco of the French melodrama came, was, in its way, quite a feat, since half the Gaiety company, including Phelps, Hermann Vezin, Cecil, and Taylor, Lyall, Belford, Miss Loseby, and Mrs. Leigh had been sent by Mr. Hollingshead to Manchester. An awkward gap this to be filled up on the spur of the moment! One has no sooner done condoling with Mr. Hollingshead on his fall than one has to congratulate him on the rapidity with which he gets up again.

With the engagement of Miss Ada Cavendish, I again dabbled in Shakespeare, leaving "taste and the musical glasses" for afterpieces. We did *Much Ado About Nothing*, according to the *Times* and the *Athenæum*, more than creditably.

Early in May I imported the whole French Comic Opera Company of M. Coulon, well known in the leading cities of France, who came with their dresses and properties; everything but the scenery. Their repertory comprised the whole of the operas belonging to the Opéra Comique in Paris, the composers being Boieldieu, Hérold, Adolphe Adam, Auber, Halévy, and others, with many composers of the lighter Italian school. This was my second French Opera speculation, and I shall allude to it again when I come to 1879, and the Comédie Française.

The French Opera Company was followed, after a week of *opéra bouffe* in English, with an English Opera Company, to show the cosmopolitan impartiality of the management. The performances were of a summer stop-gap character, and were followed by the fourth appearance of Mr. Charles

Mathews. He had been touring in the provinces for nearly a year, and, during that time, he had written himself a new piece, of course of French origin, called *My Awful Dad.* He made his first appearance in this piece at the Gaiety, September 13, 1875, and played it, supplemented by *Mr. Gatherwool,* with immense success for eight weeks. To show that, even in Charles Mathews's case, a new play has a "drawing power," I made out the following arithmetical analysis of the four engagements:—

1872.			
60 nights.			
Nightly average	£156	6	7½
1873.			
30 nights.			
Nightly average	136	4	2½
1874.			
42 nights.			
Nightly average	106	19	7½
1875.			
48 nights.			
Nightly average	152	18	3½
Total nightly average on 180 nights	£140	0	3

During Charles Mathews's fourth engagement I overcame a strong prejudice which he had against morning performances, and he appeared at two matinées during the eight weeks, and at one special matinée before his departure for India. This Indian engagement was a great social, if not a financial triumph.

It was during this engagement that Mr. Gladstone spent an evening with me on the Gaiety stage, accompanied by our mutual friend Dr. (now Sir Richard) Quain. He took an interest in every trap, slide, rope, and pulley; went with the stage-carpenter into the cellars and up in the flies, asking questions at every step, never being satisfied until he got answers that

were clear, or that conveyed to him a satisfactory meaning. When he had satisfied his taste for the useful he devoted himself to the beautiful, and had a long conversation with the handsomest actress in the theatre.

As before, in the history of the Gaiety Theatre, it was "Exit Charles Mathews; enter J. L. Toole." Mr. Toole returned from his American tour in November 1875, and immediately took his old place at the Gaiety. A three-act farce, by Mr. Henry J. Byron, called *Tottles*, received by the Press with some abuse, more contempt, and a fair share of praise, pleased the public, who are often above and beyond criticism, and saved me from the necessity of producing a burlesque for the Christmas of 1875–76. Farces and pieces on the topics of the hour carried us on to Charles Mathews's return from India, loaded with royal attentions and honours, as the Prince of Wales was present with the Viceroy at his chief performance. The matinées with Phelps and others went on as usual, and *Twelfth Night* was produced, with Phelps as Malvolio. Charles Mathews made his reappearance in *My Awful Dad* and *Cool as a Cucumber*, on Monday, April 17, 1876, playing for fourteen weeks.

I was suffering again from another attack of the *Plica Napoleonica*, though in a milder form. When Salvini made his first appearance at Drury Lane as Othello, I was present, and like most of the audience was "carried away" by the performance, especially his first entrance. I had seen and remembered Macready, and this was one of his best characters; but in startling effect and magnificent sonority of voice, the Italian beat him. Hearing that an actor named Rossi, in Italy, was regarded as the equal, and, in some characters, as the superior of Salvini, in conjunction with F. B. Chatterton I engaged Rossi to appear at Drury Lane at Easter,

1876; and as the return of Charles Mathews had released the bulk of my burlesque company, I had to house them elsewhere, and I selected the little Charing Cross Theatre (now "Toole's") for their temporary lodgings. I had now two theatres under my control, and an interest and responsibility in a third.

I had never seen Rossi, and engaged him on what the sporting men call his "public form," and this "form," at that time, I only knew from hearsay.

Being in Paris in October 1875, I had an opportunity of seeing Rossi. He was playing at the Old Italiens, then an opera-house, and now a bank, where, on October the 3rd, he was acting Othello. Two friends of mine sat next to me: Sir Thomas Henry, the senior magistrate at Bow Street, and Mr. Herman Merivale. Both these gentlemen took a kindly view of the performance, but I felt in my secret heart and my pocket that I had made a mistake. After the performance I went, as usual, to the Café de la Paix, where I was asked what I thought of Rossi and the performance.

I put my views into writing at once, and they were wired over by the "special wire" that night to the *Times*, and appeared in that journal on the following morning as now reprinted:—

THE THEATRES.

SIGNOR ROSSI.

(BY TELEGRAPH.)

(FROM A FRENCH CORRESPONDENT.)

PARIS, *October* 3.

Signor Rossi, the famous Italian actor, the friend, fellow-student, and rival of Salvini in Italy, made his appearance last night in a mangled version of Othello at the Ventadour for the benefit of the French Inundation Fund. Considering that the actor was playing something like Shakespeare in the land of Voltaire, and playing him in an unfamiliar language, his success was remarkable. The plots of Shakespeare's plays as seen in action only, divested of all the literary glamour

thrown over them by the poet, are often either trivial or brutal. *Othello* in the pantomime form has certainly very little to recommend it. In part Signor Rossi's success may be due to the fact that he was playing for a popular charity, and part of it may be due to the recollection of his performance in the same part in the same theatre in 1866. Very little of it is fairly due to the way in which he is supported by his company. The ladies and gentlemen who support him are as weak as those who lately supported Signor Salvini in England; and if this is the company that Signor Rossi intends to play with in New York and London, he will only be repeating one of the worst vices of the starring system. He is announced to appear at Drury Lane next Easter under the joint direction of Messrs. Hollingshead and Chatterton, and those experienced gentlemen will doubtless see that Madame Ristori and other eminent "artistes" are engaged to play with him. Signor Rossi is an actor of the same school as Salvini, a school that evidently has as many traditions, as many pupils, as English tragic acting. There is as much resemblance between Signor Rossi and Signor Salvini as there is between Mr. Phelps and the late Mr. Macready. They both came out of the same mould. Signor Rossi has more delicacy of conception and treatment than Signor Salvini, but he has not the immense physical force of his rival. He has a fine stage voice, but not such a magnificent organ-like voice as Salvini, nor has he the latter actor's marvellous power of filling the stage with his presence when he is in repose. On the other hand, Rossi is free from the occasional coarseness which disfigured some of Salvini's finest performances. Rossi does much which English playgoers may think violent and extravagant. In his first attack upon Iago he seems as if inclined to bite his face, and he mauls the dead Desdemona after he has discovered her innocence in a way that is only saved from being disgusting by his evident and sincere agony. Rossi will be at some disadvantage both in New York and London by coming after Salvini, but as the latter made his chief fame in both countries in *Othello*, it only rests with Rossi to select other effective characters. His merits are sufficiently great to render his appearance in England a matter of the highest dramatic importance, and there is no reason why London should not be as fortunate as Italy in seeing Salvini, Rossi, and Ristori combined in one company and playing together in one piece—*Macbeth*, for example—on the same evening.

On my return to London I saw Chatterton, and he asked me what I thought of our "star." My reply was so lukewarm that, with a little warmth, he offered to release me from my half of the bargain. This I declined, although I knew we were in for a loss, but I could not withdraw with honour.

Rossi duly appeared at Drury Lane, and was a financial failure. In some of his characters he

achieved an artistic success, but not a great one. His receipts were as bad as those of Milton's *Comus* at the same theatre. I cannot say more, except that these were dreadful. The receipts at the little Charing Cross Theatre, with its horse-collar entertainment—two farces, one by Byron, called *£20 a Year and All Found*, and a burlesque of *Rip Van Winkle*, by Reece, the company being chiefly Miss Farren and Mr. Royce—were double and triple those of Rossi at Drury Lane. With a little spiteful humour we sent the Charing Cross figures to Drury Lane every night, without any comment. The expected outburst was at last provoked. "I don't care a damn," said Chatterton; "he's a thundering good actor! There!"

CHAPTER XI.

The Ash-Wednesday agitation—A *reductio ad absurdum*—A protest—Official obstinacy—Victory at last—The job finished in 1885.

EVERY year, as regularly as Ash Wednesday came round, I exposed the absurdity of the restrictions imposed upon the London theatres by the Lord Chamberlain, and upon the Middlesex-side music halls by the Licensing Magistrates, acting in servile imitation of the Lord Chamberlain, but not on the Surrey-side music halls, because the Surrey magistrates, for some unexplained reason, were always more liberal. My advertisements generally advised the public to go to the Canterbury and South London Music Halls, the only places of amusement allowed to be open in a city of four millions of people—mostly taxpayers. I altered Voltaire, and said that England was a country with a dozen or more licensing systems, and only one fish sauce. I said repeatedly that Mr. Toole and certain members of the Gaiety company, not being willing to fast for other people's sins, would delight dissenting Nottingham with their penitential dramatic performances (perfectly legal in the provinces), while the Gaiety stage would be given up to a "variety" or music hall entertainment. Not content with this, if my "scratch company," which it sometimes did, included performing dolls, performing dogs, and a ventriloquist, I announced that, according to Act of Parliament, or the whim of the licensing authorities, "A Wooden-headed Farce," "A Dog Pantomime," and a "Ventriloquial Comedy" would be represented. The first effect of these advertisements

was to stop the "variety show" every Ash Wednesday at the Gaiety, but not my exposure of the absurdity of local and partial regulations. I still "pegged away," and when I had three theatres and three companies going in London, I drew up the following protest, and got it signed without any difficulty. I sent it to the *Times*, and it appeared on January 30, 1875, with the following introduction :—

Mr. John Hollingshead, of the Gaiety Theatre, asks us to publish the following document. "The question it raises affects," Mr. Hollingshead says, "the whole of the theatrical profession—a profession that now includes as much labour and capital as any great industrial interest" :—

ASH WEDNESDAY IN TOWN AND COUNTRY.

TO THE LORD CHAMBERLAIN.

My Lord,—

I beg to forward your Lordship a printed copy of a paper, signed by the members of my companies, protesting against the compulsory closing of certain theatres on Ash Wednesday, and I also enclose copies of a few letters received by me which show the absurd exemptions to the Ash-Wednesday rule existing in different parts of the country. Imitating your Lordship's example on a recent occasion, when you issued a printed circular to theatrical managers, I have sent this correspondence to the Press, so that the Public may be in a position to judge between us. This question will probably be brought before Parliament early in the session, in connection with an attempt which will be made to remove the illegality of morning performances at concert rooms and entertainment galleries. The moment that brilliant sample of antique legislation (the 25th Geo. II. cap. 36) is brought before the House of Commons to be patched and mended, the defects of our present licensing systems will have to be discussed and remedied.

I remain, my Lord, your Lordship's most obedient Servant,

JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

PROTEST.

We, the undersigned members of the dramatic profession and of Mr. John Hollingshead's theatrical companies, beg most emphatically to protest against the law, custom, whim, and prejudice which compel us to remain idle, and to earn nothing on Ash Wednesday, while the three millions of people, more or less, in London, not being members of the dramatic profession, and the twenty-seven millions of people, more or less, in the suburbs and throughout the country, whether

members of the dramatic profession or not, are at liberty to work on that mysterious day, in any moral or immoral, active or passive way, in which they are accustomed to work throughout the year.

Signed—

Samuel Phelps.
Herman Vezin.
E. Righton.
J. G. Taylor.
Robert Soutar.
Arthur Cecil.
W. Belford.
Forbes Robertson.
Mrs. John Wood.
Rose Leclercq.
Miss Furtardo.
Mrs. Leigh.
Miss West.
Miss Branscombe.
Meyer Lütz, for self and eighty musicians.
W. Griffiths, for self and seventy officials.
W. Knight, for self and eighty men.
G. Spikins, for self and thirty men.
— Daniels, for self and eighty men, boys, and girls.
John D'Auban, for self and fifty young ladies.
Mrs. Barber, for self and fifty workpeople.
W. H. Kendal.
John Ryder.
— Edgar.
— Roberts.
— Moxon.
— Garthorne.
John Maclean.
— Fenton.
— Butler.
— Bradshaw.
— Bettison.
— Gresham.
John Ridley.
Mrs. Kendal (Miss Madge Robertson).
Mrs. Buckingham White.
Mrs. Eburne.
J. L. Hall
E. Cotte.
— Forrester.
Charles Lyall.
— Ledwidge.
— Marshall.
— Marshall.
— Couldrick.
— Appleby.
— Crutwell.
— Gordon.
— Grosvenor.
— Ball.
— Vacotti.
Miss Loseby.
— Monroe.
— Emily Muir.
— Jenny Pratt.
— Cavalier.
— Simms.

Total—491 persons.

EXTRACTS FROM COUNTRY LETTERS.

MANCHESTER. — Prince's Theatre. — Pantomime played as usual on Ash Wednesday. Seats nearly half let ten days in advance.

Queen's Theatre.—Pantomime played as usual.

Theatre Royal.—Closed by stipulation in the patent. Music halls open.

LIVERPOOL.—All the theatres and music halls open.

NEWCASTLE.—All the theatres and music halls open.

SHEFFIELD.—The same.

SOUTHAMPTON.—Theatre open. Music hall closed.

NOTTINGHAM.—THEATRE ROYAL.—Mr. Sothern and Mr. Buckstone go down from Haymarket Theatre, London, where they are not allowed to play, and perform *Our American Cousin*. Prices doubled, and seats all booked in advance.

BIRMINGHAM.—THEATRE ROYAL.—Opened on Ash Wednesday "from time immemorial." Pantomime played.

PRINCE OF WALES'S THEATRE.—Pantomime played. Plenty of music halls also opened.

BRISTOL.—NEW THEATRE ROYAL (licensed by magistrates) open.

OLD THEATRE ROYAL (a patent theatre) closed.

GLASGOW.—Theatres open. Ash Wednesday not recognised.

EDINBURGH. — Every place of amusement opened on Ash Wednesday; also on Good Friday and Christmas Day. Two special fast days are observed in Scotland, when the theatres generally give sacred concerts.

BELFAST.—Theatre always open on Ash Wednesday. This year *Led Astray* will be played.

DUBLIN.—No legal interdict against the opening of theatres on Ash Wednesday, but they are closed because the managers think the opening would neither be "popular nor profitable."

NOTE.—GREENWICH THEATRE open. CRYSTAL PALACE open. Places of amusement in Chelsea and Bayswater open if they like. Places of amusement on the Surrey side of the water open. Drury Lane Theatre (a patent house) open with the Moore and Burgess Minstrels, who are not allowed to play at St. James's Hall.

This publication produced nothing but a polite official letter, stating that no change could be made or was contemplated.

I went on with my agitation, neither turning to the right or left, thankful for Press help, and resigned under Press opposition. After ten more years I was able to write the following letter to the *Times*:—

ASH WEDNESDAY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "TIMES."

SIR,—The restriction as to the performance of stage plays on Ash Wednesday in the London theatres has been to-day removed by a decision of the Right Hon. the Earl of Lathom, the present Lord Chamberlain. As an agitator of more than twenty-five years' standing

for the removal of this restriction, I am naturally glad, but as a Liberal I am sorry that I have to thank a Conservative Minister for this act of common sense and justice. The Middlesex magistrates, who license over 400 metropolitan places of amusement, hold their only two annual meetings of a few hours' duration on Thursday and Friday next, and the public—who, after all, are the persons most interested in this question—will be curious to see if they will act in harmony with the Lord Chamberlain. The Surrey magistrates have nothing to alter, as for years they have declined to recognise the necessity of paralysing a particular industry on Ash Wednesday.

JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

Gaiety Theatre, Strand, Sept. 29, 1885.

That job was finished! Lord Rosebery wrote to congratulate me, and hoped I should not turn Tory. It is not of much importance, but I am now a Conservative-Anarchist.

CHAPTER XII.

Benefits—Benjamin Webster—J. B. Buckstone—John Parry—"Paddy Green"—E. W. Royce—Charles Morton—A sensible and determined girl—Mr. Edward Terry—Miss Kate Vaughan—Journalistic squabbles—"Tea-board thunder and theatrical small beer."

As a manager not taking "Benefits" myself, I had more time to organize benefits for others, and those who know little of the theatrical world will hardly credit the immense amount of labour required to produce a successful result, even when the object is worthy or the person to be benefited is distinguished. I have before mentioned the benefits at the Lyceum, Drury Lane, Manchester, Liverpool, and the Haymarket, in which I was an active actor and organizer.

gross receipts then were nearly £2,000. At the "Buckstone Benefit" at Drury Lane, in 1875, when I filled the same position, and adopted the same barefaced tactics, the receipts were about £1700; later on, when Mr. John Parry, having lost his little savings in "the City," and really wanted a "leg-up," I arranged a benefit for him at the little Gaiety Theatre, which produced about £1600. When the time came for "Paddy Green" to be practically turned out of "Evans's," I got up a benefit at the Gaiety, which put more than £700 in his dear old pockets; and when one of my popular actors, Mr. E. W. Royce, was suddenly stricken with paralysis, his Gaiety benefit produced him about £1500. In the old days, there was a "Cotton Famine" benefit in Manchester, in which I took a prominent part, while I was writing about the "long strike" at Preston; and in the new days there was the Gaiety benefit for the "Isandula" sufferers, which produced a substantial amount, and following this was the "Amateur Pantomime" (about which I shall have something to say hereafter), which at the Gaiety in London and the Theatre Royal, Brighton, benefited several more or less deserving charities. As I am not strictly observing chronological order in writing, I may mention Mr. Charles Morton's Alhambra benefit in 1891, of which I was chairman. This yielded about £1,000.

Mr. Toole returned for a short engagement of two weeks in July 1876, after a long absence in the provinces, and was followed by an equally short season of serious work with Messrs. Herman Merivale and Palgrave Simpson's drama of *All for Her*, supported by Mr. John Clayton and a competent company. The play was avowedly founded upon Dickens's Carlylean story, "A Tale of Two Cities." One of the parts of some importance in the play was represented by a young lady of the regular

Gaiety company, whom I had engaged from one of the minor music halls because of her ability as a singer and dancer. She had dramatic intelligence, and, what is of more importance, good sense.

Some few months after she had been on a short country tour with the piece, giving every satisfaction to Mr. John Clayton, her temporary manager, she came to consult me seriously about her professional future. She was "articled" to me for several years—a plan I often adopted with young people of promise—and she told me candidly and truthfully that her short experience of serious work had revealed to her the defects of her education. She had saved a little money, young as she was, enough to keep her at a cheap convent school in Normandy that she had heard of, for two or three years, and if I would kindly cancel the agreement made for her she would leave the stage until she could return to it better prepared to take a responsible position. She went to the school without asking for a shilling to assist her; reported her progress, which was very satisfactory, at the intervals allowed by the strict rules of the convent, her letters being addressed to the Garrick Club to conceal her connection with the theatre. Her labour and study were not thrown away, as she is now the respected wife of a young literary friend of mine, the son of an older and dearer friend who left his mark on modern journalism.

On Saturday night, August 26, 1876, I opened the theatre with a new programme and a company which strengthened what remained of the old one, and gave it almost a new aspect. Miss Farren was still my leading burlesque lady; but from this date, except when displaced for a short time by French plays, she was destined to be a Gaiety fixture, not to be removed unless the company went with her. I made a very long engagement with Mr. Edward Terry,

which continued for seven or eight years; I found a place for Mr. E. W. Royce, which few people could have filled as well; and I added Miss Kate Vaughan to the other three principals, who brought, as her share of what soon became a celebrated quartette, an air of refinement, and a distinct and graceful style of dancing that was far removed from the gymnastic and acrobatic. The minor characters were well supported by Miss Marion West (another music-hall recruit) and Miss Alma Stanley, who was then much younger than she pretended to be, and was new to the stage. Mr. H. J. Byron provided the whole of the programme: a farcical comedy, called *The Bull by the Horns*, in which he played the chief light-comedy part, and a short burlesque (the first of a long series), called *Little Don Cæsar*, founded on Wallace's opera of *Maritana*. Popular as this new combination, especially the burlesque portion, was destined to become, it had to run the gauntlet of adverse criticism at a time when burlesque, even with backbone and story, was enough to produce newspaper *rabies*. The *Times* on this occasion was so notoriously unfair (it was no longer John Oxenford), that it produced a letter and a manifesto. This is the letter:—

THE GAIETY THEATRE.

The following letter has been addressed to the editor of the *Times*:—

"SIR,—In justice to our manager, Mr. John Hollingshead, will you allow me to answer a passage in your dramatic notice of to-day which is open to misconstruction? We get our 'grateful and well-earned holyday' at the Gaiety, and our salaries at the same time, during the various changes of programme in the summer months. If this, however, were not the case, most of us would prefer that unbroken payment which we have had at the Gaiety for nearly eight years to a 'grateful and well-earned holyday,' which generally means a three months' suspension of salaries.

"Yours obediently,

"ROBERT SOUTAR,

"*Stage Manager*."

This is the manifesto :—

TEA-BOARD THUNDER AND THEATRICAL SMALL BEER.

To the Public.—A fortnight and more has now elapsed since the production of Mr. Byron's two new pieces at the Gaiety Theatre, and the reception given to them by audiences as remarkable for quality as quantity clearly proves that they possess those elements of success which the public are much more keen to discern than the journalists. The brightness and "go" of the burlesque were generally admitted, but the opening farce was generally abused, and abused for not being what it never professed to be—a comedy. The *Times* newspaper, which now usually cultivates a certain toothpick after-dinner style of criticism, even went so far as to condemn the whole entertainment, the author, and the public, and to give directions for the management of the theatre which would land the manager in the Bankruptcy Court and the actor in the workhouse. This teaching your grandmother to suck eggs style is the common property of newspapers, but it is a mistake to push it to the verge of prophecy. The gift of prophecy is as rare as it is valuable, and if the gentleman who is now allowed to shake the tea-board thunder of the *Times* over the heads of theatrical managers really possesses this gift, he ought to be able to do much better than drudge for a newspaper. If, however, he only believes that he possesses this gift, his forecasts, as in the case of *Tottle's* and *The Spelling Bee*, are sure to be wrong, and he will only expose himself and his journal to contempt and ridicule. The cocksure tone is only safe when no predictions are hazarded. Two things one may always expect to read in the papers whenever a new piece by Mr. Byron is produced. First, that it is the worst work of a too prolific author; secondly, that it was written in six hours. The public generally give a denial to the first statement; and the second scarcely concerns them. However good a piece may be, they know that, under the Gaiety system, it can never remain too long in the bills; while, if bad, they have only to avoid the theatre for a night or two to secure its immediate removal.

John Hollingshead.

Gaiety Theatre, Sept. 11th, 1876.

It will be seen from this that I follow in the footsteps of my old master, Thackeray—though I followed at some distance. Other managers followed me, the chief protester being Mr. F. B. Chatterton, who objected to the critical estimate of *Richard the Third* at Drury Lane, with Mr. Barry Sullivan in the chief character.

CHAPTER XIII.

A "chapel of ease"—The Strand and theatrical receipts—Madame Celine Chaumont—What can be done in half an hour—James Albery and Toole at the Gaiety—Byron and the "company" at the Opéra Comique—A friendly race—Trick rifle-shooting—"The skipping-rope dance"—Miss Jenny Hill—Drawing from the music-halls—Mr. Dallas—Miss Constance Gilchrist—An apprentice—Miss Phyllis Broughton.

ONCE more, in November, I became the lessee of the Opéra Comique in the Strand, using it as a "chapel of ease" for the Gaiety. I opened with a piece by Mr. Maltby, called *Bounce*, and a farce called *Cryptoconchoidsyphonostomata*. Mr. Charles Collette and a fair company represented these pieces, but they were not to the taste of the public.

There is a superstition prevalent in the theatrical world that any theatre in the Strand has only to open its doors—of course, with a proper and brilliant "gas device," by Defries—and twenty or five-and-twenty pounds a night will walk in as a matter of course. I am sorry to have to dispel this illusion. I have played at the Gaiety, with Mr. Edward Terry and a good company in a Pinero comedy, to two pounds thirteen shillings, and we played the two polyphonic pieces at the Opéra Comique on a certain Friday night to six pounds thirteen shillings. The next night, Saturday, through the instrumentality of Mr. M. L. Mayer, I got Madame Celine Chaumont over from Paris, and put her on at half-past ten at night in one of her half-hour pieces with two of her inimitable songs; and although she had only been announced once in the morning and evening papers, the receipts

from less than seven pounds were increased to one hundred and eighty! And yet there are people who think that a certain class of theatrical management is not gambling!

Early in December the Gaiety company—Mr. Terry, Mr. Royce, Miss Farren, Miss Vaughan, and Mr. Byron, and others—were transferred, with their farcical comedy and burlesque, to the Opéra Comique, under my management, and Mr. J. L. Toole returned to the Gaiety to find new playfellows. He appeared in a piece by Mr. James Albery, called *The Man in Possession*. Mr. Toole was supported by Mr. J. F. Young, an excellent "all-round" actor (since dead), and the best "Eccles" in *Caste* I ever saw, not excepting its creator, Mr. George Honey; Mrs. J. F. Young, Miss Kate Phillips, Mr. H. Westland, Mr. Charles Collette, Mr. Edmund Leathes, and my daughter, Miss Hollingshead, who was then on the stage, and had appeared with success in Gilbert's *Broken Hearts* with the Kendals at the Court Theatre. I do not pretend to judge my own family, so I will only quote the *Daily Telegraph* on Albery's piece:—

> Full of playful prettiness, and occasionally of emotional earnestness, was the Penelope of Miss Hollingshead. Almost childish simplicity is illustrated by the young actress in a way that cannot fail to win the sympathies of the spectator, and every movement reveals natural grace as well as close study of the requirements of art.

The Gaiety company, housed at the Opéra Comique, went on much as usual. When one so-called comedy got stale, Mr. Byron turned on another—when one burlesque began to show signs of waning popularity, it was not bolstered up by bill-stickers, but was withdrawn (perhaps only for a time), and Mr. Byron turned on another.

When the time came to produce a burlesque at the Gaiety—for the Gaiety without a burlesque was something like a pastrycook's without pastry—

Mr. Reece wrote *William Tell* for Mr. Toole and his new companions, and clever as the popular comedian was, there could be no question that he missed the help of Miss Farren. He had Miss Kate Phillips, but Miss Phillips, though excellent in comedy, was not a burlesque actress, and Mr. Alfred Bishop and Mr. Collette, admirable in their way, compared unfavourably with Mr. Royce at the other house, where Mr. Terry had also increased and consolidated the reputation which he had gained at the Gaiety. The Gaiety was not a good house for a "star," except a star like Charles Mathews, who brought his own pieces and his own special style of acting.

One feature of the *William Tell* burlesque was a parody of some American shooting feats which were then very popular at the Olympic. I had my own view about this champion shooting, and thought it dangerous, but was assured by the licensing authorities that the tricks were clever but only tricks, and perfectly harmless. I made some further investigations which convinced me that I was right and the authorities wrong. The "champion shot" eventually killed his living target during a performance in America. A skipping-rope dance, performed by a young lady, Miss Rose Fox, whom I discovered at a "penny gaff" in Shoreditch, was so graceful and attractive at the Gaiety that it produced scores of imitators for several years afterwards. It was invented about 1860 by a Madame Ramsden, who was a ballet mistress at Sheffield.

My persistent attempts to transplant "talent," as it is called, from the music-hall to the stage, were generally successful, as I had the same faculty for discovering quality in a singer, or dancer, or eccentric performer, that a buyer in a city house has in selecting silk, or a tea-taster in selecting tea. My favourite "hall" was the "Old Mogul" in Drury Lane, now

called the "Middlesex," the oldest music-hall in London. Country "professionals" wishing to get a London engagement generally went to this hall on trial, the old "chairman," Harry Fox, being a man of reputed sound judgment. If the singer or dancer "passed" him, he or she could then go out in the metropolitan world boldly, and ask for an engagement. Very few music-hall "celebrities" can disown this nursery. There I saw, for the first time, Miss Jenny Hill, without exception one of the greatest female geniuses who ever appeared on the music-hall platform. Her sense of character—low life, of course—and her dramatic power of conjuring up solid pictures of men and women who never appeared bodily on the stage, would have delighted the elder Mathews. If education and early opportunity had been given to her in her youth, the world would have had an actress who would have lived in stage history.

I selected Mr. Dallas from the music-halls, and when he once got on the theatrical boards he struck root there and never left them. I was not so

learnt the art of give and take, and I was consequently patient with him. The next day he was sad, and showed a tendency to mope in corners. He had his part in his hand, but it seemed to confuse him. I did not disturb him. The next morning, before rehearsal, he came up to my room for a private interview. I saw, in a moment, that he was mentally troubled, and did what I could to comfort him. He was very different from his other self that I had seen at the "Middlesex." He gave me back his written part. "I am ashamed to tell you," he said, "but when they put that piece of paper into my hand, I knew it was all up. I fancied everybody was looking at me, and I think I held the paper upside down. I can't read or write, sir!"

I released him from his engagement, and kept his secret. He went back to the music-halls and has always been successful. Education is a luxury—not quite as expensive as it used to be—but it is not always a necessity. I have known many successful men like my uneducated comedian.

Miss Kate Vaughan came to me, not unfamiliar with music-hall work, and remained a distinguished member of my company for several years. Her engagement was one of the most agreeable I ever made after I opened the theatre. She was always ladylike and considerate, and though business and friendship, like business and relationship, are best kept apart, I am indebted to her friendship and that of her husband, the Honourable Colonel F. Wellesley, for many days and nights that I always look back to with pleasure.

Another music-hall engagement that I shall always regard with satisfaction, was that of Miss Constance Gilchrist. She was so young when I first made her a member of the Gaiety Company, that we went through the form of an apprenticeship. This was arranged by an

excellent "agent," now dead, Mr. Ambrose Maynard, who existed before his class was "Legion." I did all I could to make her comfortable in the theatre, and she repaid me by quiet and amiable conduct, and a determination to remain with me as long as I continued in management. She had several opportunities of "bettering herself," which she at once declined —in one case against my wish. She might have had a leading position as a juvenile actress at a prominent London Comedy Theatre. She has now retired from the stage and made a distinguished marriage.

Miss Phyllis Broughton was another young lady, equally agreeable and ladylike, who came to me from the music-halls, and who remained with me for several years, although I could not always place her in a position justified by her ability.

It is a singular fact, but a fact nevertheless, and one which it is my pleasant duty to record, that all these ladies — beginning with Miss Loseby and Miss Tremaine—had as much refinement and regard for the discipline of a management, which they knew regarded their best interests as its own, as if they had been sent into the theatrical world from one of the severest of the continental Conservatoires.

CHAPTER XIV.

Fires in theatres—Panic-mongering—Letters to the *Times*—The John Parry benefit—Letter from Charles Mathews—Mr. F. C. Burnand and *Artful Cards*—Charles Mathews' last appearance—His position on the stage.

LATE in 1876, the first severe fire panic in theatres set in, promoted, as usual, by the Panic-a-liners. I stated my views in the *Times* in two letters, which I now reprint:—

The *Times*, December 27, 1876.

FIRES IN THEATRES.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "TIMES."

Sir,—The lamentable fire at the Brooklyn Theatre has brought down such a flood of official documents, leading articles, suggestions, and even insults on the heads of theatrical managers, that it is only fair to allow one of us space for a few words in reply. Managers are so much accustomed to be treated like the old man who owned the ass in the fable, that they become, perhaps, a little deaf to advice; but there is no reason why "A Fellow of the Chymical Society" should say in the *Times* of Monday that it is idle to hope that any plan will be adopted to protect theatrical audiences. The Chymical Fellow's plan is, of course, chymicals, and if the Chymical Fellow will turn his reforming eye on the "Sale of Poisons Act," and prevent country chandler-shopkeepers ladling out arsenic in the midst of butter, cheese, and bacon, I will lay in a ton of tungstate of soda to-morrow, though in practice I have found it a very uncertain anti-inflammable agent.

There are many questions which are more or less unfitted for public discussion, and this question of fires in theatres, I venture to think, is one of them. No writer wants to create a panic, and yet every article is helping to raise one. If our theatres are unsafe the Lord Chamberlain, his officers, the 6th and 7th Victoria, cap. 68, the good sense and humanity of theatrical managers, and other forces are quite able to provide a remedy. It is quite possible that former Lord Chamberlains may have licensed many theatres that ought never to have been built or licensed; but now that official attention has been drawn by the Brooklyn fire to this fact, no good, but much harm, may be done by the publication of "regulations" which ought to be enforced before they are

printed, and not printed before they are enforced. The public mind may be wrought up to such a pitch of excitement that any hysterical person may cause a serious accident in any crowded building at any moment. Some of the advice so freely bestowed upon managers might, with more advantage, be given to the public in teaching them how to go into a building in a decent, orderly, and unselfish manner. A crowd that nearly tramples each other to death in going into a theatre is not likely to act with any more calmness in going out. French playgoers have been schooled for generations into very different behaviour; but, then, phlegmatic Frenchmen are so unlike excitable Englishmen.

JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

Gaiety Theatre.

The *Times*, February 22, 1877.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "TIMES."

Sir,—Since you last allowed me to address you on the subject of fires in theatres the panic has somewhat subsided, but sufficient interest, not to say anxiety, is shown in the matter to prompt both Sir William Fraser and Mr. Onslow to question the Home Secretary in the House of Commons. No doubt in the fulness of time both these gentlemen will get their official answers; meanwhile, perhaps, you will allow me to communicate the result of certain inquiries and calculations which I have had made by a friend of mine, an eminent actuary, accustomed to confront sensational topics with the strict logic of figures. The result of this gentleman's researches is that in the whole of England—in London and the so-called Provinces—for the last fifty years, with ill-constructed, over crowded, and badly-surveyed theatres, he can only find a record of one solitary death from fire, and he cannot ascertain whether this unit of mortality was one of the public or one of the players. This one death from fire in fifty years occurred in London in 1841, since which time there has been no similar death in London with thirteen theatres burnt, while in the so-called Provinces, with eight theatres burnt, there has not been a single death. The explanation of this is, that the majority of the theatres were destroyed during the hours when no audience was present, and I may say generally that there is as little chance of a theatre being burnt down during the hours of performance as there is of a person being burnt to death in the street at Cheapside during the middle of the day for want of passers-by to see and extinguish the fire. When my friend takes his unit of mortality—the servant girl burnt in 1841—and makes his calculation as to the playgoer's risk of a fiery death while attending a theatre, he comes to the conclusion that it is almost absurd to state it; and, taking it out of his decimals, it may be put at about a billion to one. If the London playgoer will pay me a penny every time he goes to a theatre I think I could assure him a sum in case of death that would be "beyond the dreams of avarice."

I am, &c.,

Gaiety Theatre, February 21. JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

I have before alluded, in passing, to the John Parry benefit at the Gaiety. It took place on Wednesday afternoon, February 7, 1877, and I may quote the following out of a long article from the *Morning Post* of February 8 concerning it :—

Mr. John Hollingshead, with characteristic generosity, gave the free use of his theatre for yesterday's festival, and the members of his company testified their friendship for Mr. John Parry by the voluntary tender of their valuable services. In Sheridan's play of the *Critic* Mr. Charles Mathews was to have appeared both as Sir Fretful Plagiary and Puff, but, being unfortunately incapacitated by illness, he sent the following amusing letter of apology to the Manager :—

"59, Belgrave Road, Feb. 6, 1877, 4 P.M.

"MY DEAR HOLLINGSHEAD,—I cannot tell you how disappointed I am at not being able to assist at the benefit of my dear old friend John Parry to-morrow. I should have been delighted to put my best leg forward, but, alas! at this moment I have no one leg that is better than the other. That agreeable complaint, so airily spoken of by those who never had it as 'a touch of the gout,' has knocked me off my pins altogether. Your gout is a sad enemy to light comedy (we young light comedians are only men after all), and how could I, in the character of Puff, talk to Sneer and Dangle of my 'hopping and skipping about the stage with my usual activity,' while hobbling on by the aid of a stick (I have sometimes been badly supported even by two)! It is the first time I ever disappointed the public on a similar occasion, and only comfort myself with the reflection that I shall not be missed among so many, and that, after all, so that the illustrious John be in good form, the audience will be amply gratified and pardon my unavoidable absence. I need not wish Parry success—one who has never known anything else—and can only envy those who are able once more to witness and enjoy it. I send no doctor's certificate—I wish I was unable to do so—but if anyone doubts, all the harm I wish him is that he should exchange places with me for four-and-twenty hours.—Faithfully yours,

"C. MATHEWS."

In the absence of Mr. Charles Mathews the characters originally assigned to him were sustained by Mr. A. Bishop and Mr. C. Collette, and the piece was cast thus :

IN THE COMEDY.

Sir FRETFUL PLAGIARY	Mr. BISHOP.
SNEER	Mr. MACLEAN.
DANGLE	Mr. BARNES.
Mrs. DANGLE	Miss LITTON.

IN THE TRAGEDY REHEARSED.

PUFF	Mr. COLLETTE.
GOVERNOR of TILBURY FORT	Mr. YOUNG.
Earl of LEICESTER	Mr. F. CHARLES.
Sir WALTER RALEIGH	Mr. WESTLAND.
Sir CHRISTOPHER HATTON	Mr. ROYCE.
Lord BURLEIGH	Mr. SOUTAR.
MASTER of the HORSE	Mr. FAWCETT.
Don FEROLO WHISKERANDOS	Mr. TOOLE.
The BEEFEATER	Mr. TERRY.
FIRST SENTINEL	Mr. H. J. BYRON.
SECOND SENTINEL	Mr. BELLEVILLE.
FIRST NIECE	Miss KATE VAUGHAN.
SECOND NIECE	Miss HENDERSON.
CONFIDANTE	Mrs. LEIGH.
TILBURINA	Miss E. FARREN.

The production of *Artful Cards* at the Gaiety, an adaptation of Labiche's French Farce, *La Clé*, served not only to back up the *William Tell* burlesque, but provided Mr. Toole with a good piece to take to the country. I was never a buyer of pieces. I paid a nightly fee, and if they were successful or suited my "stars"—my "shooting stars," I might call them—these stars had the chance of touring with them before delighted audiences in the provinces, and making more money out of them than had been made by their liberal-minded manager. Mr. Toole was always the worst "first night" actor on record—at least, at the Gaiety. He was always excessively, and sometimes defiantly, nervous, and imperfect in his words. The management was often blamed for faults not its own, and the management generally defended itself. Here is one defence selected from many:—

"ARTFUL CARDS."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "DAILY TELEGRAPH."

SIR,—I am sorry to have to contradict your dramatic critic. *La Clé* was produced in Paris nearly two months ago, and *Artful Cards* has had three weeks' careful rehearsal. If your representative knew a little more about the mechanism of the stage and Mr. Toole's first night peculiarities, he would understand that the most laborious rehearsals

may be thrown away upon an actor who has half the piece in his hands, and plays his part (very successfully) in an *ad libitum* manner.

JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

Gaiety Theatre, Strand, Feb. 26.

The close of 1876 and the early part of 1877 Mr. Charles Mathews spent as usual, working in the country, and on his return to town, finding that I could not take him in at the Gaiety owing to a season of French plays, I induced him to go to the Opéra Comique, as I had sent my transplanted Gaiety company to the country, and he played there under my management for nine weeks in *My Awful Dad*, *The Liar*, *The Cosy Couple*, etc. His company was made up of recruits from the Gaiety. One young lady he objected to, as she was useless, though attractive. I removed her. Another he was rather amused with, although she had a peculiarity which might have been troublesome. She was not entrusted with many lines; but when she had finished one of her brief speeches, she always turned to Mathews, and said, "Now it's your turn." One night his teeth —a false set—became unfixed, and as he could not speak till he got them fixed again, he had to turn his back to the audience. Her peculiarity then became troublesome, for she kept saying—certainly in a low voice—"It's your turn, I tell you; what are you waiting for?"

This *Opéra Comique* season was his last in London. On Saturday night, June 2nd, he made his last appearance on the boards of a London theatre.

The results of these various engagements, spread over six years, were highly satisfactory to both of us. The gross receipts were nearly £40,000, out of which he received nearly £10,000 for playing about 354 times, or nearly £30 a performance. Long as he had been on the stage, he told me this was the first money he had ever really earned and kept, as

during the greater part of his career he was a manager as well as an actor, and what he made on the stage always went in management and financial expedients. His wife, Mrs. Mathews, did not teach him prudence; she did better—she became his banker.

He was a man of taste and education—a good amateur artist in oil and water colours; he spoke Italian fluently, and his French was so good (perhaps a little pedantic!) that he appeared in Paris with critical approval. His knowledge of the world was extensive and various; he had mixed in the best society, abroad and at home; he knew and appreciated French and Italian cookery of the best kind, and was a sound judge of wine; but he had one singular defect of palate which he admitted, but could not explain. He was a smoker, and he could not tell the difference between a penny cigar and one that cost a couple of shillings. A "good cigar in the conventional sense," he always said, was thrown away upon him.

His acting was something that was born and died with him. It was the perfection of what appeared to be unstudied ease and spontaneous and rapid brilliance. There may have been art—there doubtless was art in it—but no microscopic critic could discover it. It attained Horace's standard; it was the perfection of concealment. Whatever part he played the gentleman shone through it, and his wildest impudence would have captivated an archbishop. It was theatrical champagne of a rare and probably (though I sincerely hope not) of an extinct vintage.

As a story-teller and humorist he was unequalled. His anecdotes would fill a volume—a volume that would light up a thousand bookstalls. He was a brilliant speaker, and though his speeches were evidently carefully prepared, they were delivered without effort. The cleverest thing of this kind was

his proposal of his own health when he took the chair at a theatrical public dinner. As a private letter-writer, he was as witty as he was charming; collected, his letters would become literature; as a public letter-writer, either in French or English, he had the instinct of the born journalist. His stories were often told by himself, against himself, but with the true humorist's enjoyment. There is the one about Wigan, in Lancashire, where he was playing *The Critic* to a bewildered audience, and a collier got up in the pit and addressed the audience as a protesting unit. "Ay! Look 'ere!—a pretty set of duffers! they don't know a bloomin' line of their parts!" There was the one about the waiter at the Manchester Hotel, who, having been sent with an order to the theatre by Mathews to see Mathews, was asked by Mathews when he came back how he liked Mathews, and after some hesitation said, "Who's going to pay me for my time?"

My business with Charles Mathews, as I have said before—what little business I had—was transacted in the most pleasant manner possible. There was no fuss, no squabbling, and no agreements; he took my word and I took his; and no engagement during my first ten years of management, apart from the question of profit and loss, ever gave me more personal gratification.

He died June 24, 1888—not at home at South Belgravia, as he called it, or Pimlico, as I jocularly persisted in calling it, but at the Queen's Hotel, Manchester, while on tour—at the age of seventy-five. He was nearly seventy when he first came to the Gaiety Theatre.

CHAPTER XV.

French plays on a system—The Gaiety *Français*—Humbert—Coulon—The Comédie Française.

In May 1877 I began French plays at the Gaiety on something like a system, as I found that, however popular the standing entertainment might be, as soon as the summer developed fashionable playgoers wanted a change of diet. The history of my speculations in French plays—my own speculations, and no one's else—has been given before, and was translated and repeated in *Le Temps*, the French journal, which owns M. Francisque Sarcey as its dramatic critic. It was called a "Procès Verbal," and this may possibly describe it from a French point of view, but its accuracy was not and could not be questioned. This book would not be complete if I did not repeat this exhaustive statement.

Very soon after the opening of the Gaiety Theatre, in 1868, I had offers of several French companies who wished to visit England, and to make their appearance under my "distinguished management," etc., etc. Most of these companies, I am bound to say, were stock provincial or travelling companies, whose owners or directors thought that what was good enough for Lille or Rouen was good enough for London. I explained that English people, and especially Londoners, are almost as familiar with the best performances in Paris as the Parisians themselves; but my explanations were not much heeded. The Frenchman who comes to London regards it as a second Bordeaux, perhaps slightly inferior. My first foreign experiment

was made with the Belgian company from the Alcazar in Brussels, belonging to M. Humbert, the discoverer of Lecocq. In it were Mdlle. Paola Marie, M. Jolly, M. Ed. Georges, and others; and they played a host of *opéras bouffes* at a time when *opéra bouffe* was more or less of an unknown tongue in the metropolis. Their success was very moderate. After dabbling in this forbidden music I became more "legitimate," and engaged the well-known comic opera troupe then directed by M. Coulon. His repertory was immense, and so were his chorus ladies. They were more noted for lungs than beauty. In a few weeks we presented about thirty works of Auber, Hérold, Boieldieu, Adolphe Adam, etc., or as many as the Opéra Comique had presented in Paris in a period of five years with the aid of a State subsidy of £5,000 per annum. One singular fact in connection with these performances is worth mentioning—not a single notice appeared in the *Times* newspaper, with the exception of a short paragraph announcing that, after I had done with comic opera, I intended to get Salvini, Rossi, and Madame Ristori to act together. It is only necessary to mention this to show the unfair influences which are allowed to govern musical criticism.

Not content with these minor representations, I turned my attention to the Comédie Française. Having a friend in Paris of considerable influence—Mr. Campbell Clarke, of the *Daily Telegraph*—I asked him to open negotiations with M. Perrin, and, through the latter, with M. Thiers, the Minister of the period. This was no slight favour to ask of Mr. Clarke, for M. Thiers had a nasty habit of getting up at four a.m. and making appointments at his house—a considerable distance from the centre of Paris—at the rosy hour of six in the morning. M. Perrin was polite, if not enthusiastic; but M. Thiers was obdurate. He made touchy remarks about the flight of the cele-

brated company to England in 1871, when chaos unfortunately reigned in Paris, and gave them to understand that they were established and subsidised as a purely Parisian institution. If they went to London, their State payment of £10,000 a year would certainly be jeopardised, and probably withdrawn.

No more was to be said for the moment on that point, and the matter ended. French plays in London at the Gaiety went on at intervals, and also at other theatres, notably the Royalty, under the able management of MM. Didier and Schey. For some time M. Jonas, a brother of M. Émile Jonas, the popular composer, had acted as my agent and manager, until Mr. M. L. Mayer came to me with various tempting propositions. My first desire was to re-open the Comédie Française negotiations, but this required time. We imported Chaumont, who was always a success, Madame Theresa—a bold but successful experiment, the Vaudeville (Paris) company—a quasi-success, and we played *L'Ami Fritz* with M. Febvre and company with not a very

warned off the contract by experts of various kinds. The Bond Street houses—the "libraries"—advised me not to touch it; my landlord thought I was mad, and many brother-managers held the same opinion. Mr. John Hare, to whom I mentioned the scheme and cost, evidently agreed with my landlord, and Mr. Henry Irving, to whom I offered a share in the undertaking, as a well-deserved compliment, did not hesitate to say that, if the "first company in Europe" would not come to England on more moderate terms, they ought to remain at home. I had no single word of encouragement from man, woman, or child until I appealed to the public by inviting subscriptions. In twenty-four hours I knew I was right, and I had my joke for nothing. What that joke was is obvious. Here was the great historical company of Paris—of France—coming to England to be housed—where? At a theatre sometimes called the "Nudity," generally called the "Frivolity," which, although it could name Alfred Wigan, Charles Santley, Irving, Phelps, Charles Mathews, Miss Neilson, Toole, and many others equally eminent, as having acted on its boards, was given up, according to report, to those who merely grin through horse-collars. This was the temple in which were to be temporarily enshrined the representatives and the masterpieces of the House of Molière, because an enterprising commercial manager on one side of the Channel had agreed with an equally enterprising commercial manager on the other. England is not the only nation of shopkeepers.

In spite of the "best authority," which persisted in saying that M. Perrin would never carry out his bargain, or would never be allowed to carry it out, the company duly arrived, and were received at Dover like a deputation of emperors. It was noted that they travelled with their own critic, M.

Francisque Sarcey, or that he travelled with them, to protect them in the land of the barbarous Shakespeare, and that M. Jules Claretie, novelist then, dramatist afterwards, and director now of the Comédie Française, was also in watchful attendance. They came—they were seen—and they conquered. What their coming did for the cause of art in England it is not my province to discuss. They applied for their money every Monday morning in advance, and I paid it. If their visit did no other good, it showed how theatrical "stars" are created and by whom they are created. They came here as the Comédie Française; as the Comédie Française they were advertised in most of the forms that are used by the British showman; no one member of the troupe was singled out for large type, or top or bottom position, and yet the public—the great and only star manufacturers—selected a favourite in twenty-four hours. This, it is almost needless to say, was Sarah Bernhardt. To a large majority the Comédie Française was Sarah Bernhardt, and Sarah Bernhardt was the Comédie Française. When she played, the house was crowded; when she was out of the bill, the house was moderately attended. No one felt this or gave expression to his feeling more than M. Got. "Last night," he said, "when *she* played, you saw the house; to-night, when *she* is not playing, you will see the difference. What is the use of our wonderful *ensemble*, our historical reputation, and our classical masterpieces, when we are at the mercy of an idol, made by the public in a couple of nights?" A proof of this was shown at a *matinée* on Saturday, July 21st (1879). The piece was *L'Etrangère*, one of those meretricious dramas which M. Perrin "ran" because there was "money in it." Sarah Bernhardt, who represented Mrs. Clarkson, was ill, and the piece could not be performed. There was over £500 in the

house. A hasty conference was held, and it was decided to do *Tartufe*. *Tartufe* was played, as only that company could play it, and only £84 of the £500 remained to see it. On the following Wednesday an extra *matinée* was given of *L'Etrangère* as a compensation, and with only two days' announcements the receipts reached £469. The total receipts of this remarkable French season of six weeks were, in round numbers, £20,000, the highest being *Hernani*, £571 (run close with *Phèdre*, £570 10*s.* 6*d.*), and the lowest, *Tartufe*, £349. The receipts were actually more than £20,000, because tickets were sold to the public by the public at a premium, but of this I have no authentic record, as I received none of the extra money, although some of the French journals accused me of this meanness.

CHAPTER XVI.

The Royal General Theatrical Fund—First speech as treasurer—Joseph Jefferson—Mrs. Langtry's descent on London society—*Little Doctor Faust* and *The Grasshopper*—Signor Pellegrini and "Jim" Whistler—More discussions.

MY position at this time singled me out to follow Mr. Buckstone as the Treasurer of the Royal General Theatrical Fund, and I accepted the position. I got the Duke of Beaufort to take the chair at my first public dinner, and as this book covers nearly all that I have done—good, bad, and indifferent—it may as well give a report of my first speech in connection with this charity :—

My Lord Duke, my Lords, Ladies, and Gentlemen, the high compliment that has been paid to me by associating my name with this toast, and the equally high compliment which was previously paid to me by placing me in a position which compels me officially to respond for this excellent Charity, have been received by me with some little tinge of regret. These compliments have conveyed to me in as delicate a manner as possible a hint that I have arrived at that respectable period of middle-age when a man, if he is fairly honest, and has the advantage of a "venerable" appearance, may be trusted with the confidence *and money* of his fellow-men. In this country a man by force of character may become a Prime Minister at five-and-twenty, but it is not usual to invest such giddy youths with the responsible and somewhat grandiloquent title of Treasurer. Treasurers, like Chancellors of the Exchequer, are generally chosen for qualities that are the reverse of brilliant, and probably if I had the power and inclination to make you a very epigrammatic and amusing speech, you would laugh and applaud me very much, but would regard me as a very dangerous person to be intrusted with the care of your property. As your new Treasurer, Ladies and Gentlemen, my first duty is to pay a passing tribute of respect to the gentleman who preceded me in that office—to the prolific and popular dramatic author, the eminent comic actor—the patient and long-suffering Manager who served you faithfully and energetically for thirty years—Mr. John Baldwin Buckstone. It would be impossible for a mere Manager like myself to attain one-tenth part of the popularity

of this great and deservedly great public favourite, and the services he has rendered the General Theatrical Fund will, I am sure, not be forgotten by you, even if your gratitude does not take the solid form of a public testimonial. My next duty, Ladies and Gentlemen, is to go over the old ground as lightly as I can, and to speak to you about the finances of your Institution. Your invested capital is in round numbers about £13,000, and your income from all sources, subscriptions, the Lacy bequest, and interest on capital, is only about £1,300. On the other side of the account you pay to annuitants about £2,040, while your working expenses, though singularly small, reach £200. This being the state of our affairs, it is quite clear that we are in urgent need of outside help, and I can appeal to all charitable and generous visitors who are not members of the Dramatic Profession with a very good grace, as I represent a charity that is without stain and without reproach. This is no charity which spends 18*s.* 6*d.* to administer 20*s.*, no charity managed or mismanaged by ornamental committee men. The working expenses are a mere trifle, the Committee is composed of practical working men, and any claimant would be as clever as another claimant who shall be nameless if he or she imposed upon this Committee. I feel less delicacy than I should otherwise feel in asking the outside public to contribute to this Fund when I remember what actors and actresses do for other charities. There is scarcely an institution in the land that has not been helped by the play actors, and whether it be a cotton famine in one year or a mine explosion in another, the Stage is always foremost with its mite for the relief of human suffering. No class of the community—except medical men—gives away more unpaid labour than actors, and the actor's time and work are as much money as the author's book, the artist's picture, or the banker's bullion. While appealing to the outside public, I should not do my duty as Treasurer did I not urge upon the Dramatic Profession the claims of this Charity. In the old days every actor and actress thought it an honour to belong to the Drury Lane or Covent Garden Theatrical Funds, and I want to see the same feeling shown in connection with this Institution. I want to see this Fund as general in fact as it is in title. I may remind the members of the Dramatic Profession that they are no longer a fortuitous concourse of penniless vagabonds. In numbers and capital they are now rapidly rivalling the great industrial organisations of the country. London alone has added seventeen Theatres to its list during the last ten years, and thirty thousand people in London alone are now daily employed in the difficult task of amusing the public. Every country town, large or small, follows the Metropolitan example at no very long interval, and yet this enormous *Profession* is as destitute of organisation as a herd of cattle. There is nothing in the remuneration of the Theatrical Profession to account for this apathy. There are poor and needy members—sick, ailing, and unfortunate members of the Dramatic Profession, as there are in all professions—but, as a rule, the play-actors now are not poor. A popular low comedian gets the pay of an Archbishop, and a second low comedian is better off than an Under-Secretary of State. It is not poverty, it is not illiberality which

checks this power of organisation, it is simply apathy. If every Theatre and every Manager were to take this matter in hand in the right spirit, a Theatrical Association might be arrived at which would be something more than a mere benefit club—a trade union if you like—which might be of immense service in watching over the best interests of the Profession. While on this subject I may say a few words to our annuitants, and I may beg them not to fancy themselves prematurely old, and not to declare on the Fund at the first attack of what may be only a passing indigestion. Actors, like wine, often improve with age, and their sphere of usefulness is not often to be measured by the calendar. I speak with some authority on this subject, for, though the Gaiety is generally associated with the idea of youth and beauty, no Manager of my standing, I believe, has dealt so largely in actors of a certain antiquity. As a practical man I need scarcely tell you I should not have dealt in them if I had not found them to be profitable. I remember once on my travels going into a *Schauspielhaus*, in a great German city—one of those national and subsided Theatres which certain gentlemen wish to see established in this country. There I saw a performance of the inevitable Goethe's *Faust*, which lasted for six hours, and the united ages of the Faust and Marguerite were just over a century and a half. Being a polite man to the ladies, I will not say what was Marguerite's share of these figures, but the most youthful person in the cast was the nurse—a giddy young thing of about sixty! I mention these facts to encourage some of our old actors and actresses not to leave the stage and its healthy occupation too prematurely. Having delivered myself of these somewhat critical remarks, it is now

on my part, and with a handsome reward for my services. I was quite willing to be associated with such an actor, but for various reasons the plan was never matured. It ended in Jefferson adding a glory to the Gaiety matinées.

During the performance of *L'Ami Frits* at the Gaiety in the summer of 1877, Lady Sebright gave a party, to which she invited M. Febvre and the French company, and during the evening she promised me a treat as a supposed judge of female beauty. I was to see the handsomest woman in England, then comparatively unknown. When she came, it was Mrs. Langtry—the first and the best of the modern "Society beauties."

In August, after the French season, the Gaiety company—the company of the famous "quartette"—returned, and began their junketings with Byron's *Weak Woman* and the *Bohemian Girl* burlesque. Miss Evelyn Rayne, Miss Wadman, and Miss Amalia had been added, but Byron had retired once more to authorship. About the middle of October we produced one of the best of the short burlesques—*Little Doctor Faust*, by Byron. The "quartette" were never better fitted. A little, but not much, was said about the desecration of Goethe (I called it the Gaiety, *not* the Goethe, version in the advertisements), but the protesting writers were not aware that *Faust* forms the most popular subject for burlesque in Germany. This was soon followed, as a first piece, by an adaptation of *La Cigale*, a piece by Meilhac and Halévy, in which Madame Chaumont made a great hit in Paris. I wrote it myself, and called it *The Grasshopper*, and gave some offence by keeping the names of the French authors prominently in the bills, and keeping my own name as adapter in the background. It was cheap honesty, but apparently was open to objection. There was much "chaff" in the piece about the "Impres-

sionist" school of painting, and Mr. Gordon Thomson and Signor Pellegrini gave this clever artistic form. A caricature of "Jim" Whistler was painted by Pellegrini, with the celebrated artist's consent; but this consent not being generally known, I was accused of bad taste in exhibiting caricatures of living people, as if no such thing existed as caricature journalism. A very pretty row was "kicked up" and accepted by me as so much free advertisement.

CHAPTER XVII.

Special morning pantomime—A "new departure"—A distinguished amateur pantomime—Benevolent tomfoolery—Solid results—An invitation to Brighton—The late Lord Houghton as our guest—The late Lord Dudley.

AT Christmas we produced, for the matinées only, a little trifle in the shape of a pantomime, acted by a large company of tried and untried people, and we kept the night company (as much as possible) and the night performances distinct.

As we had got our hands in for pantomime, the idea occurred to me of getting up an amateur pantomime for a charitable purpose. I knew the amateur pantomime invented by Albert Smith (I have spoken of the one in which I played pantaloon at the Lyceum), and I thought I could not do better than follow so good a master. I ventilated the idea at the "Beefsteak Club," and in a night or two I had a volunteer company big enough for two pantomimes.

The composition of the piece was the work of the Benevolent Authors' Company, Limited—R. Reece, W. S. Gilbert, F. C. Burnand, and H. J. Byron.

The cast was as follows:—

CHARACTERS

ALI BABA (a woodcutter)	... ...	Captain GOOCH.
GANEM (his son)	... ...	Mr. W. F. QUINTIN.
CASSIM (his brother)	... ...	Mr. ALGERNON BASTARD.
HASSARAC (captain of the Forty Thieves)		Mr. JOSEPH MACLEAN.
ABDALLAH (his lieutenant)		Miss HELEN BARRY (Mrs. A. Rolls).
MESROUR	... ...	Mr. F. H. M'CALMONT.
BENRIDDEN	Gentlemen of "The Forty" (The deserving Hanging Committee).	Mr. W. WYE.
MUSTAPHA		Mr. LESLIE WARD.
SAAD		Mr. GILBERT FARQUHAR.
BEDER		Captain H. E. COLVILE.
NOUREDDIN		Lord DE CLIFFORD.
ASSAD		Major ROLLS.
TRUMPETER	... ...	Mr. A. STUART WORTLEY.

The remainder of the Forty Thieves represented by Messrs. E. DARRELL, W. WYE, J. WESTROPP, J. CUMMING, C. RINGROSE, C. DALY, HUGH DRUMMOND, W. HIGGINS, J. GRAHAM, CECIL CHAPMAN, ARTHUR B. COOK, BENSON, and AMPHLETT; Hon. C. VIVIAN, Hon. F. PARKER, &c.; also 20 young ladies who have kindly given their services, by permission of the manager and directors of the Alhambra.

MORGIANA	Miss LYDIA THOMPSON.
COGIA	Miss ELEANOR BUFTON.
The GOOD FAIRY	Miss LUCY BUCKSTONE.

Scene 1.—(Written by Mr. R. REECE) Exterior of Ali Baba's House.

Scene 2.—(Written by Mr. W. S. GILBERT) The Wood.

Scene 3.—(Written by Mr. F. C. BURNAND) Interior of Ali Baba's House.

Scene 4.—(Written by Mr. HENRY J. BYRON) The Cave. The Transformation.

CHARACTERS OF THE HARLEQUINADE.

CLOWN	Mr. W. WYE.
HARLEQUIN	Mr. W. S. GILBERT.
PANTALOON	Mr. T. KNOX HOLMES.
POLICEMAN	Captain H. E. COLVILE.
SWELL	Lord DE CLIFFORD.
TAILOR	Mr. W. F. QUINTIN.
BRICKLAYER	Mr. LESLIE WARD.
BUTCHER	The Hon. F. PARKER.
BUTCHER'S BOY...	... Mr. C. DALY.
SWEEP	... Mr. W. HIGGINS.
WAITER	... Mr. J. WESTROPP.
UNG MOSSOO	... Mr. A. BASTARD.
PASSERS-BY	Mr. A. B. COOK. Mr. CECIL CHAPMAN. Mr. HUGH DRUMMOND, &c.
COLUMBINE	... Mdlle. ROSA.
OLD WOMAN	Mr. F. H. M'CALMONT.

Scene 1.—A Quiet Street.

Scene 2.—An Equally Quiet Bedroom.

The rehearsals of this pantomime took place mostly at night after the performance was over, and the determined and conscientious way in which W. S. Gilbert worked at his part of harlequin—missing nothing, shirking nothing—from the most quiet "business" to the

window-leaps, showed clearly to what he owed his success in life—the rare gift of humour being his stock-in-trade. Lord de Clifford (since dead) showed wonderful skill as a high kicker; Captain (now the celebrated Colonel) Colvile was a marvellous acrobatic policeman; "W. Wye" was quite up to the professional level as clown; Leslie Ward did "lightning sketches" of politicians, like a thorough music-hall artist; and T. Knox Holmes (since dead) was an expert pantaloon. But the gem of the performance was the grimly earnest and determined harlequin of W. S. Gilbert. It gave one an idea of what Oliver Cromwell would have made of the character. W. S. Gilbert's kindness and liberality in this work cannot be too much praised. The time, labour, and writing he contributed to the pantomime were worth more than the whole receipts, which amounted to about £700. These were distributed between the general theatrical fund and other charities, including the "Home for Lost and Starving Dogs"—an old and favourite asylum of mine—because, unlike many charities, it harbours and encourages no impostors.

The performance, it is needless to say, was a triumph, the Prince and Princess of Wales and their then young family being present. The Prince had shown an interest in the rehearsals. The performance was repeated for the "*Eurydice* Fund," and several hospitals were not forgotten, and the whole company, under my direction, went to Brighton and gave a performance at the Theatre Royal on Saturday evening, March 9, 1878. We had invited one guest, the late Lord Houghton, who was one of the most popular members of the Beefsteak Club. He was the only great talker who was tolerated at this little club, which had as many prejudices as the old "Travellers." Lord Houghton was a man of great and varied knowledge, tempered with humour. When

he threw himself back in his chair, and was given a theme for talking, he rubbed his hair over his head from the back to the front, and made gutta-percha faces, but what he said was always worth listening to. He told me one night that if he was reduced to sixpence a day, he should spend twopence in bread, which would keep body and soul together, and the rest in gin, which would [redacted] him excitement, and joy, and perhaps enable [redacted] to forget his troubles. He told me a story of a certain President of the United States and his family, which I think ought to be printed, if it has not got into type already (as most things do in these days). This President was dining with the Queen at Windsor Castle, accompanied by his wife and daughters, but his son—a youth—was not asked to the Royal table, being provided for in a separate room, with certain Lords in Waiting. This arrangement was not altogether pleasing to the boy—a boy in America being a man—and he did not scruple to say so. "If I'm not good enough," he said, "to be introduced to your Queen of England, like my sisters, I guess I'll go to some hotel and pay for my dinner." In a modified form the boy's discontent was conveyed to the Queen, and with her usual good nature she included him amongst the Royal party. He admitted that he had complained of what he thought was a slight, which he said would have encouraged his sisters to lord it over him, and he asked the Queen what she really thought of the girls.

Another guest at Brighton, who, to a certain extent, invited himself, was the late Lord Dudley, and as chairman at the supper, after the performance, I was made aware that Lord Houghton (as he told me himself) was not on friendly terms with Lord Dudley. Lord Houghton sat on my right and Lord Dudley (whom I knew very slightly) sat on my left, and I got through the banquet to the best of my ability.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The advent in London of the electric light—A good advertisement—Nothing more.

AT the commencement of August, 1878, I made an important step in improving public lighting, which may be told in the following story from the *World* of "How the Electric Light came to London":—

Towards the close of 1877 a couple of huge lamps, burning a very brilliant white light, made their appearance in front of the Grand Opera in Paris. Even in a city so well illuminated as Paris these lamps attracted general attention, and inquirers were told that the system employed was a Russian patent, with the invention of which a gentleman named Joblochskoff was credited. By degrees the new luminary spread in Paris, as was natural amongst an intelligent and energetic people not fettered with too much local self-government. The Joblochskoff lamps were soon seen on each side of the new Avenue de l'Opéra, at the Orangerie public gardens, at the Arc de Triomphe, the Châtelet Theatre, and other places of importance. The parochial mind in England was not yet sufficiently acted upon, and it was not until an experiment with the Joblochskoff machinery was announced at one of the great docks at the East-end of London that the gas companies became aware of the existence of this formidable rival. The usual result followed. A small panic in gas shares immediately took place, for no particular reason, as no inquiry had been made, and this panic immediately subsided after it was known that the experiment, from a variety of causes, was a comparative failure. The gas companies, representing in London alone about twelve millions sterling of capital, sank once more into a placid sleep. One vestry issued a report, a discussion took place at the Institute of Civil Engineers, but no one introduced the light to the London streets, although it had been burning in Paris for more than nine months.

Towards the close of June, 1878, the manager of a prominent London theatre—a house devoted more to the persistent amusement of the public than to the cultivation of a very high standard of dramatic art—decided to close his doors for redecoration. The house had been kept open almost uninterruptedly for nearly ten years, and it was thought that at least four weeks might be spared for artistic repairs. The manager, a somewhat energetic, not to say restless, individual, even before his house was closed, began to consider how he could utilise his enforced holiday, so as to reopen with a new sensation, and it occurred to him that the "electric light" would be a good thing to introduce in London

for that purpose. It did not occur to him that it was hardly the proper function for a theatrical manager to act as the pioneer in this matter in a city governed by forty or fifty vestries and a Metropolitan Board of Works, with an annual rating that is fast treading on the heels of the Imperial taxation, and with gas companies, as before stated, representing twelve millions of capital. He did not stop to argue; he went to Paris, and sought out the leading director of the Joblochskoff light. He was politely received by that gentleman, and was offered his invention for the whole of England at the moderate sum of £350,000 English money. The theatrical manager was hardly prepared with the sum at a moment's notice, and he suggested a preliminary trial of the light at a handsome royalty. This suggestion was not acceded to, but was treated with polite contempt. He was disappointed, but not defeated. He offered a liberal sum for a few weeks' experiment, and then was candidly told that the Joblochskoff light could not be shown in London, as an intermediate machine, with which it had to be worked, was the subject of a Chancery suit about an infringement of patent.

In this extremity the baffled manager made further inquiry, and found that the Joblochskoff light was not the only one in the Paris market. He found, in fact, the Lontin light, the inventors of which had not had the money and influence to get possession of the principal street in Paris, but who had to be content with illuminating the station of the Lyons Railway and the goods depôt of the railway of the West. This, as far as he could judge, was equal in effect to the Joblochskoff, while he was told that it had many advantages in point of economy and adaptability, and had been preferred in a kind of competition in the Hippodrome. Luckily, he found that a friend—a well-known banker in Paris—had a small interest in this treasure, having assisted the inventor at starting; and through him he arranged for the exportation to England of the necessary machinery, lamps, wire, &c., and two experts to establish and manage the lights.

Arriving home in the midst of builders and decorators, his work began again. To set the French machinery in motion (an enormous revolving magnet and electrical coil) he required the aid of a powerful steam-engine of not less than 20 horse-power. This is not a machine easily found in a cellar or fitted up in a garret, and the manager had to look round his immediate neighbourhood, as his electrical machines would not allow him to go farther than 500 yards; and the farther he went the greater expense for the connecting-wire. He went to an old friend, Mr. Algernon Borthwick, the proprietor of the *Morning Post*, and stated his requirements; but as the paper had only one steam-engine, the proprietor—who hates machinery—was naturally timid about having this tampered with.

The manager again went his ways, and looked in at many printers, bookbinders, &c., finding that half the houses in his locality were full of steam-engines, but not of the requisite horse-power. At last he approached the proprietor of a popular journal at some little distance from his premises—Mr. Passmore Edwards, of the *Echo* newspaper. He knew Mr. Edwards was a man of progress. Mr. Edwards said:

"I don't want to stand in the way of anything likely to benefit the world, but I wish you had never asked me for this help. I shall ask you a prohibitive price, because I really don't want you here." "What is that price?" asked the manager. "Twenty pounds a week," replied Mr. Edwards. "I'll take a three months' contract," said the manager; and the conversation ceased.

When the magnet and the distributor, weighing about four tons, had been got with difficulty into their position near the engine, they had to be imbedded in masonry, and then the Parish authorities had to be applied to for permission to open the roadway to convey the wires underground to the points of illumination. When this consent was obtained and the work done, the case of French lamps was opened, and it was found that everything breakable had been smashed to atoms *in transitu*. A lamp-maker had to be found to construct another, and better, set of lamps in forty-eight hours, and on Thursday night, August 1st, 1878, about midnight, the light was successfully rehearsed; and on the following night at nine o'clock, the Strand, about the centre, was publicly lighted with the electric light. This light, which is artificial daylight, with a dash of moonlight in it, is produced on a large scale at about half the cost of gas, and is without smell, without heat, and is not destructive of colours. When all the theatrical managers, publicans, and advertising tailors in London have secured this light for their premises, the fifty vestries, the Metropolitan Board of Works, and the gas companies with their bloated capital will think there is really something in it.

My next-door neighbour, the *Morning Post*, wrote as follows, August 3, 1878:—

LIGHTING BY ELECTRICITY.—Passengers along the Strand last evening were interested and astonished at the dazzling brilliancy all around the Gaiety Theatre, where an electric light new to London was being experimentally tried. Visitors to Paris are well acquainted with the effect of the electric lights in the Place de l'Opéra, but the six lamps here employed gave a combined effect much more striking. The arrangement is that of M. Lontin, and the generator here used is the identical machine employed during the last few weeks of the exhibition, when work was carried on night and day. This has been now placed in a neighbouring newspaper office, and is worked by a steam-engine there. The wires are carried underground to the Gaiety, and then to the several lamps. The "regulators" which hold the carbon "candles" and keep them in due position while burning are stated to be on an entirely new principle. M. Lontin claims two important features as peculiar to his invention; one is the division of the currents so that they can be used at different lamps at will, and as many as thirty-six lights have been kept going at once with one machine; the other is the small amount of attention that the "candles" require. The light has been introduced to England by Mr. John Hollingshead with the hope that the experiment will lead to the introduction of electric lighting into London.

The cost of the six arc lights at the Gaiety was about forty pounds a week, and I kept them burning for about nine months, until their novelty was a little worn off and they began to lose their value as an advertisement. I had tried one for a few nights inside the building, at the foot of the grand staircase, but the ladies objected to the fierceness of the light, and I had to tone it down with coloured mediums. Mrs. Langtry, playing her first comedy part, pretended to be very anxious that the secret of her soft complexion should not be discovered.

For some weeks I was a millionaire—against my will—in the estimation of my friends and the public. The effect of those six lights on the whole area of gas shares had been so marked, reducing the quotable value of this class of property several hundred thousand pounds, that it was fully expected I had gone down to the Stock Exchange and made a colossal fortune. The holders of gas shares who were timid, and saw visions, sold to their brother gas shareholders who had more courage; one director of a gas company sold to another director, and one gas company official sold to another official, but the outsiders, like myself, could only play the part of lookers-on, not daring to buy for fear of being called upon to deliver. The light was a pioneer, and a good advertisement for the theatre, and well worth the money it cost; but, beyond that, it was nothing.

CHAPTER XIX.

Public duties—More "benefits"—Thackeray's *James*—A literary burlesque by Herman Merivale—Death of Phelps—A double bill and company—The training and introduction of Mdlle. Ænes, the invisible wire dancer—The rebuilt restaurant—The manifesto of the tenth anniversary—The Comédie Française prospectus—Doubts—Letters—The Isandula benefit—The arrival of the French company.

JUDGING from this extract from a leader in the *Daily Telegraph*, 27th April, 1878, I found a little time for public duties, although I was not a vestryman, or a member of the Metropolitan Board of Works:—

It is, meanwhile, interesting to know that statistics of a most curious nature bearing on the number of places of public recreation in London, the Rome of the modern world, have been brought together by Mr. John Hollingshead, who has recently laid before the House of Commons Committee on the Metropolitan Management Bill a most instructive and comprehensive schedule of the establishments in which a population of four millions, to say nothing of a floating contingent of country cousins and strangers temporarily within our gates, are permitted to divert themselves.

The very first item in Mr. Hollingshead's statement will awaken feelings little short of astonishment. According to a published report of his evidence, there are in the British metropolis no fewer than 57 theatres—certainly twice the number that existed in London fifteen years ago, and probably five times as many as there were within the Bills of Mortality half a century since. The present aggregate comprises, first, "the houses twain of Covent Garden and of Drury Lane." Old Drury, by virtue of the Royal letters patent granted by Charles II. to Killigrew, and Covent Garden from the latter concession granted to Manager Rich, the first English harlequin and producer of the *Beggar's Opera*, claim to be exempt from the authority of the Lord Chamberlain, so far as a licence is concerned, although the patent rights of both theatres, which gave them a monopoly in the performance of the "legitimate drama," have long since been swept away. Under the immediate licensing and censorial control of the Chamberlain, there are, however we are told, 45 theatres, holding, in the aggregate, 80,000 persons; and there are, in addition, 10 theatres licensed by the divisional magistrates, one of which is the Court Theatre, Sloane Square, which

happens to be situated about twenty yards beyond the verge of the Master of the Revels' jurisdiction. The ten extra theatres hold some 38,000 spectators, and in this list is included the Crystal Palace, which contains two theatres and a concert-hall under one and the same roof. Next we come to the music-halls, of which no fewer than 347 of all sizes and classes, and holding altogether 136,700 persons, are licensed by the Middlesex magistrates. Three music-halls of the first rank are capable of containing from 15,000 to 20,000 people apiece; six of a secondary grade accommodate respectively from 2,000 to 3,000; the third and fourth class of *cafés chantants* seat numbers of visitors ranging between 800 and 1,500, and from 300 to 700; and the remainder is made up of 272 public-house concert-rooms, harmonic meetings, "sing-songs," and the like; many of them of a very humble description. On the Surrey side of the Thames the magistrates license 61 music-halls, three of which are of the vast dimensions and superior attractiveness of the Canterbury; the rest are of a much smaller type; and in the aggregate the transpontine music-halls will hold 32,800 persons. It is worthy of note that the austerely moral City of London ostensibly grants licences to only two "caves of harmony," the Sussex Hall and the White Horse; still Mr. Hollingshead is of opinion that there must be other places within the municipal limits where the festive song and the light fantastic toe are suffered to appear in combination with the flowing bowl; and altogether he calculates that there is public accommodation for about 6,400 "Sons of Apollo" in the City. The grand total of persons who can be received at one time in our 57 theatres and our 415 music-halls is 302,000—not much more than one-twelfth of the population.

In May, 1878, a "Shakespeare Memorial Benefit" was given at the Gaiety, which realised £450 towards the Memorial Theatre, now built at Stratford-on-Avon. It was chiefly remarkable for the fact that the telephone was brought into prominent requisition,

The "structural defects" of the Opéra Comique Theatre, during my short tenancy, were noticed in the Press by letter-writers signing "An old Playgoer," "Another Playgoer," etc., and sometimes by letters sent to the Lord Chamberlain, who politely referred them to me. I always objected to the same licence being given to a badly-constructed and cheaply-built theatre, as to a theatre constructed with every care and expense, and I am afraid my answers to this official correspondence generally conveyed this feeling. Amongst my letters I find the following:—"I did not answer the letter in the *Morning Post*, as I wish to have as little public discussion as possible about the Opéra Comique Theatre. My own opinion is that the theatre ought never to have been built, and certainly ought never to have been licensed. During my short occupation of the house I have given strict orders that all gangways are to be kept free, and all doorways to be properly indicated and kept open. This is all I can do with this or any other theatre under my control. If the public commits any folly under the influence of panic, I shall certainly not consider myself responsible for the results." The theatre has since been improved.

As I am responsible (and gladly accept the responsibility) for dragging Mr. G. A. Sala on to the Gaiety horse-collar stage, so I am responsible for placing my friend, Mr. Herman Merivale, in the same position. The author of the *White Pilgrim* needs no praise from me, but I knew that, with his literary taste and poetic feeling, he was gifted with rare and delicate humour, and I persuaded him to take the *Lady of Lyons*—which, clever as it is, lies close to the precipice, on the edge of the gulf of tomfoolery. Herman Merivale continued the story from the point in the cross-roads where electro-plated sentiment and burlesque fun meet, and carried it

down the latter turning. The piece was well written and well played, and ought to be revived. It was full of fun, character, and delicate satire, but was written before Mr. W. S. Gilbert had obtained a secure footing, and had shown that burlesque need not be utterly divorced from literature.

The year 1878 was not to close without my having to lament the death of Mr. Samuel Phelps, who died at the age of seventy-four—rather unexpectedly. At Christmas I introduced a holiday bill, consisting of an early pantomime, written by Mr. Byron, on the subject of "Jack the Giant Killer," and the same author's burlesque of *Fra Diavolo*, with what was practically a double company. Miss Jenny Hill was the "Jack" in the pantomime, and Miss E. Farren was young Fra Diavolo. Miss Constance Gilchrist was advanced to the front as a juvenile dancer, and after months of careful rehearsal, I brought out Mdlle. Ænea, whose invisible-wire dance, then first seen, has been popular in France, Germany, and England ever since. The Gaiety Restaurant, rebuilt and enlarged, was opened under the management and proprietorship of Messrs. Spiers and Pond, and I issued the following manifesto:—

TO THE PUBLIC.

To-morrow, December 21, 1878, will be the tenth anniversary of the opening of the Gaiety Theatre. The house was handed over to me on December 21, 1868, and it still remains in my possession. I am spared an elaborate defence of my management by one great and important fact that is probably unequalled in metropolitan theatrical history. I have kept the theatre open for ten years without closing it for more than ten weeks at night, for repairs, &c.; and against these ten weeks I have given 379 matinées—equal to one year and a quarter of night performances. I was the first to establish these matinées on a new principle—that of giving a different performance in the afternoon to the one given at night. I am happy to say that I have found many imitators, both in England and in France. I promised, on December 21, 1868, that I would abolish all fees, and I have kept my word. If this is an administrative mistake it is a very large one, for it has cost me £10,000; but I have no reason to believe that the public are blind to the

comforts of the Gaiety system. In arranging my entertainments I have been governed by few theories and fewer prejudices. I have never tried to force on the public what I think they ought to have—I have rather striven to give them what I think they want. My eclecticism has covered "Shakespeare, taste, and the musical glasses." The three celebrated actors, whose loss the stage now has to deplore, Charles Mathews, Samuel Phelps, and Alfred Wigan, were all intimately associated for several years with the Gaiety Theatre. I was the first to bring the electric light to England for public buildings; and while our parochial and civic authorities are reporting voluminously on this subject, the Gaiety frontage and the Strand generally are made brilliant by this new illuminator. Finally, after nearly three years' negotiation, I have induced the whole of the Comédie Française to visit England for the first time in their entirety next June, and I am happy to say that the public have supported me in this effort by subscribing £12,000 in nineteen days.

JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

Gaiety Theatre, Strand,
Dec. 20, 1878.

I followed this up by publishing the Gaîté Française prospectus:—

THE COMÉDIE FRANÇAISE.

SEASON, 1879.

GAIETY THEATRE, STRAND.

The entire company of the Théâtre Française are willing to come to England and give forty-two representations at the Gaiety Theatre—thirty-six nights and six Saturday afternoons—commencing Monday, June 2nd, 1879, and ending Saturday, July 12th, a period of six weeks. They are encouraged in this determination by the warm support which was accorded to a portion of their body in London in 1870. This will be the first time the company have ever visited England in their entirety, and it may probably be the last for at least fifteen years, as it is only the closing of the theatre for repairs which has created the present opportunity. Their pieces will be selected from upwards of forty of their most popular dramas, tragedies, and comedies. The necessary official consent has been obtained for their representations, but before the absolute signature of the Minister is asked for it is thought advisable to ascertain, as far as possible, what amount of support is likely to be accorded to the enterprise by the English public. The elaborate *mise-en-scène* of the pieces cannot be prepared under several months, and no responsible manager would like to invite seventy of the first actors and actresses in France before assuring himself, to some degree, of the reception they are likely to receive. The subscription list will therefore be opened at the Gaiety Theatre on Saturday, November 23rd, and closed on Saturday, December 14th. The prices will be as follows:—

Orchestra stalls, 21*s.*; pit stalls, 10*s.*; balcony stalls, 10*s.*; upper box seats (numbered and reserved), 5*s.*; amphitheatre seats (numbered and reserved), 2*s.* 6*d.*; Gallery, 2*s.* Private boxes: five guineas, four guineas, two guineas and a half, and two guineas. Subscribers to the whole series will be allowed a reduction of 15 per cent. The performances will be under the direction of M. Perrin, the director of the Comédie Française, and my representative, Mr. M. L. Mayer; but the responsibility of carrying out the programme will, of course, rest with me. M. Perrin has pledged himself not to bring over his company on any other conditions or under any other management.

JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

COMÉDIE FRANÇAISE.

SOCIÉTAIRES.—Messrs. Got, Delaunay, Maubant, Coquelin, P. Febvre, Thiron, Mounet-Sully, La Roche, Barré, and Worms; Mesdames Favart, Jouassain, Edile Riquier, P. Ponsin, Dinah-Felix, Riechemberg, Croizette, Sarah Bernhardt, Baretta, and Broisat.

PENSIONNAIRES.—Messrs. Garraud, Prudhon, Boucher, Martel, Joliet, Dupont-Vernon, Villain, Roger, Richard, Truffier, Baillet, Coquelin-cadet, Davrigny, Volny, Silvain, and Paul Reney; Mesdames Granger, Lloyd, M. Martin, Bianca, J. Samary, Thenard, Fayolle, Dudley, and Fremaux.

&c., &c., &c.

LIST OF PIECES, CASTS, &c.

Hernani, by VICTOR HUGO, will be played by Messrs. Maubant, Mounet-Sully, Worms, Prudhon, Martel, Dupont-Vernon, Joliet, Richard, Villain, Baillet, Davrigny, Paul Reney; Mesdames Sarah Bernhardt, Thenard.

Le Sphinx, by M. OCTAVE FEUILLET, will be played by Messrs. Maubaunt, Febvre, Worms, Prudhon, Coquelin-cadet, Paul Reney; Mesdames Croizette, Sarah Bernhardt, Bianca.

Mademoiselle de Belle Isle, by ALEXANDER DUMAS, will be played by Messrs. Delaunay, La Roche, Baillet, Prudhon, Boucher; Mesdames Edile Riquier, Broisat, Bianca.

L'Etrangère, by M. A. DUMAS, Fils, will be played by Messrs. Got, Coquelin, Febvre, Mounet-Sully, Prudhon, Truffier, Joliet, Baillet; Mesdames Madeleine Brohan, Croizette, Sarah Bernhardt, Lloyd, Bianca.

Le Demi-Monde, by M. A. DUMAS, Fils, will be played by Messrs. Delaunay, F. Febvre, Thiron, Garraud, &c.; Mesdames Croizette, Ponsin, Broisat, Bianca, Marie Martin.

Le Fils Naturel, by M. A. DUMAS, Fils, will be played by Messrs. Coquelin, Febvre, Thiron, Worms, Garraud, Boucher; Mesdames Favart, Jouassain, Baretta, Lloyd, Thenard.

Le Supplice d'Une Femme, by M. A. DUMAS, Fils, will be played by Messrs. Got, La Roche; Mesdames Favart, P. Ponsin, *petite* Delaunay.

Le Gendre de Monsieur Poirier, by M. EMILE AUGIER, will be played by Messrs Got, Delaunay, Barré, La Roche, Thiron, Richard; Mademoiselle Croizette.

Les Fourchambault, by M. EMILE AUGIER, will be played by Messrs. Got, Coquelin, Barré, Thiron; Mesdames Croizette, P. Ponsin, Reichemberg, Agar.

L'Ami Fritz, by Messrs. ERCKMANN-CHATRIAN, will be played by Messrs. Got, Febvre, Barré, Garraud, Truffier, Coquelin-cadet; Mesdames Jouassin, Reichemberg, Thenard.

Adrienne Lecouvreur, by E. SCRIBE, will be played by Messrs. Got, Laroche, Boucher, Garraud, Villain, Coquelin-cadet; Mesdames Sarah Bernhardt, Lloyd, Edile Riquier, Martin, Bianca.

Les Caprices de Marianne, by ALFRED DE MUSSET, will be played by Messrs. Got, Delaunay, Coquelin, Worms; Mesdames Madeleine Brohan, Croizette.

Petite Pluie!!! by ED. PAILLERON, will be played by Messrs. Febvre, &c.; Mesdames Lloyd, Broisat, Samary.

La Cigale chez les Fourmis, by Messrs. E. LEGOUVÉ and LABICHE, will be played by Messrs. Delaunay, Barré,; Mesdames Jouassain, Baretta.

Le Marquis de Villemer, by GEORGES SAND, will be played by Messrs. Delaunay, Thiron, Barré, Worms; Mesdames Madeleine Brohan, P. Ponsin, Croizette, Reichemberg ou Baretta.

La Joie fait Peur, by MADAME DE GIRARDIN, will be played by Messrs. Got, Delaunay, Prudhon; Mesdames Favart, Reichemberg, Broisat.

Le Marquis de la Seiglière, by JULES SANDEAU, will be played by Messrs. Coquelin, Thiron, Febvre, Coquelin-cadet, Boucher; Mesdames P. Ponsin, Broisat.

Il ne faut jurer de Rien, by ALFRED DE MUSSET, will be played by Messrs. Got, Delaunay, Thiron, Truffier; Mesdames Madeleine Brohan, Reichemberg.

On ne badine pas avec l'Amour, by ALFRED DE MUSSET, will be played by Messrs. Delaunay, Thiron, Barré, Coquelin-cadet, Truffier; Mesdames Croizette, Jouassain, Reichemberg.

Le Barbier de Séville, by BEAUMARCHAIS, will be played by Messrs. Coquelin, Febvre, Thiron, Coquelin-cadet; Madame Baretta.

Le Médecin malgré Lui, by MOLIÈRE, will be played by Messrs. Got, Barré, Richard, Coquelin-cadet, Boucher; Mesdames P. Ponsin, Reichemberg, Bianca.

L'Avare, by MOLIÈRE, will be played by Messrs. Got, Coquelin, Coquelin-cadet, Prudhon, Davrigny, Martel; Mesdames Dinah-Felix, Reichemberg, Baretta.

Le Misanthrope, by MOLIÈRE, will be played by Messrs. Delaunay, Coquelin, Prudhon, Boucher, Baillet, Coquelin-cadet; Mesdames Croizette, Favart, Broisat.

Le Tartufe, by MOLIÈRE, will be played by Messrs. Febvre, Maubant, Barré, Delaunay, Boucher, Coquelin-cadet, Richard; Mesdames Lloyd, Jouassain, Reichemberg, Dinah Felix.

Le Luthier de Crêmone will be played by Messrs. Coquelin, Thiron, La Roche; Madame Baretta.

ALFRED DE MUSSET.
1. La Nuit d'Octobre.
2. Un Caprice.

ÉMILE AUGIER.
1. Gabrielle.
2. L'Aventurière.
3. Le Post Scriptum.

OCTAVE FEUILLET.
1. Le Village.

E. SCRIBE.
1. Oscar.
2. Valérie.
3. Bataille de Dames.
4. La Camaraderie.

BALZAC.
1. Mercadet.

JULES SANDEAU.
1. Marcel.

MOLIÈRE.
1. Les Femmes Savantes.
2. L'École des Femmes.
3. L'Étourdi.
4. Le Malade Imaginaire.
5. Les Fourberies de Scapin.
6. Les Précieuses Ridicules.
7. Le Mariage Forcé.
8. L'École des Maris.

CORNEILLE.
1. Le Cid.
2. Cinna.
3. Le Menteur.

RACINE.
1. Les Plaideurs.
2. Phèdre.
3. Andromaque.

BEAUMARCHAIS.
1. Le Barbier de Séville.
2. Le Mariage de Figaro.

VARIOUS AUTHORS.

We were not idle in the early part of 1879, although that year, above and beyond all, was the year of the Comédie Française. Mr. Byron produced a comedy called *Uncle*, to be followed very shortly afterwards by *Boulogne*, a piece by F C. Burnand founded on a French play—*Niniche*—that *Madame Judic* had made popular in Paris. These two authors were like chess-players making alternate moves. Mr. Byron turned on a little burlesque called *Esmeralda*, to back up the comedies.

The Isandula Benefit, before alluded to, formed the 406th Gaiety matinée, and was thus announced :—

GENERAL THEATRICAL BENEFIT,

In aid of the Widows and Orphans of all men belonging to the Queen's troops killed at Isandula and Rorke's Drift, 22nd and 23rd January, 1879. Wednesday afternoon, May 7th, 1879, under the immediate patronage of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales.

Mr. JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD was asked to organise this Benefit by the Committee presided over by General Sir HASTINGS DOYLE, and he has to acknowledge the kind and ready assistance given to him by the following managers :—Mr. Irving, Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft, Mr. Hare, Messrs. Gatti, Mr. Gooch, Mr. J. S. Clarke, Mr. D'Oyly Carte, Messrs. Thorne and James, Mr. C. Wyndham, Mrs. Swanborough, Mr. Alexander Henderson, Miss Fanny Josephs, and Miss Litton. Mr. Toole and Mr. Sothern both regret that they are unable to appear owing to provincial engagements. All the various Companies have kindly given their services, and many volunteers have been left out for want of space. The Gaiety company, orchestra, staff, and servants, have also given their services. Mr. Nathan, of Tichborne Street, has kindly lent the military dresses for *Ours*, and Messrs. Clarkson and May have kindly given their aid.

The financial result was very satisfactory (nearly £600), and was duly acknowledged.

At the Gaiety we found time for a special morning performance of the First Part of *Henry IV.*, to give Mr. Arthur Sketchley a chance of showing his idea of Falstaff. I could not lend him the artificial stomach I had had made for Mr. Phelps, as I had given it to Mr. Charles Calvert, of Manchester, an actor and manager who had done as much for the stage as Mr. Charles

Kean. Sketchley was fairly successful, and certainly was better than Mark Lemon, a practised actor, in the same character. Both were "fat" readings.

French and English journals treated the coming of the Théâtre Français Company as an affair of great international importance. The special correspondents wrote and wired particulars of squabbles, temporary difficulties, and the "attitude" of this or that actor, manager, or actress. I could fill a volume with these newspaper reports, but I merely select this from the *Times* of May 24, 1879, as a sample :—

The performances of the Comédie Française in London will not be arranged without some difficulty, and a series of storms are preceding the departure of the company for England. Mdlle. Sarah Bernhardt, the Emile Ollivier of the Comedie Française, is always the one to raise these storms. Mention has already been made of the great actress's objection to make her first appearance in the unpleasing character of Mrs. Clarkson. This hitch was removed by an arrangement to give, on the 2nd of June, selections, including the second act of *Phèdre*, one of Mdlle. Bernhardt's best tragedy scenes. A more serious and delicate difficulty has since arisen. Four or five days ago the director of the Comédie Française, M. Perrin, submitted to the Committee of *Société*

is one of the chief attractions, isolated and rival performances might be arranged for with her. It is easy to understand how this struck those whose interests and honour were directly affected, for outsiders cannot conceive how such a procedure is consistent with the standing either of the *artiste* or the company. I may add that the Comédie Française contains a goodly number of *artistes*, in every sense of the word, who would not at any cost consent to making this excursion an occasion for private enterprises, and that men like M. Got or M. Delaunay, only to mention these two, must feel very keenly the bad effect which might result for their company if, during the six weeks it is in London, its chief members go about from drawing-room to drawing-room trading on the name which should figure only on the playbill of the theatre at which the whole house is to appear. It was doubtless understood that a few privileged gatherings might hope for the pleasure of a private entertainment, but this is a very different thing from the length to which it is now sought to go.

The *Daily News* sent a Special Correspondent to Folkestone to meet the boat on the Saturday which brought nearly the whole of the company who were to perform on Monday, June 2, 1879.

CHAPTER XX.

Monday, June 2, 1 -1' est—More letters—The beginning of disc n np—Lucre *v.* Art—Articles —English and l.

ON the 2nd of ared, and their success and perfor eeks are matters of well-known theatri was not present at the first performa s at the Princess's witnessing the firs ion of Mr. Charles Reade's drama of *Dr.* hich I have before spoken. The Comédie Française season gave rise to a little newspaper correspondence, mostly in the *Times*.

The first letter concerned the exits and ventilation of the Gaiety. The theatre was not large, and was filled nightly to its utmost capacity :—

THE GAIETY THEATRE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "TIMES."

SIR,—Your correspondent, "A Physician," is not quite correct in saying that "the complaints of the difficulty of exit have had some result," as the overabundant means of exit which I alluded to in my former letter have existed for 11 years. No theatre in London is provided with more outlets, or with more windows for the purpose of ventilation, if the public and the actors will only allow these windows to be opened. The theatre has ample opening in Catherine Street, Exeter Street, and Wellington Street, and a lesser opening in the Strand; but while the actors on the Wellington Street side insist upon sealing themselves in, and the public on the other three sides follow, to some extent, the same example, the crammed theatre on a June night is sure to be hot. The "sunlight" is a necessary evil at present, but far less heating than the side lights used in many theatres. As the first person who brought the electric light to London, and one who intends to develop this substitute for gas as much as possible, I can only say that

the moment I can perfect the necessary arrangements, I shall substitute this cool and effective light, coloured with an agreeable medium, for appliances that are more fit for cooking than lighting.

Yours, &c., JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

Gaiety Theatre, Strand, June 13.

The next letter was a defence of the "stage-mounting" at the Gaiety :—

THE GAIETY AND THE COMÉDIE FRANÇAISE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "TIMES."

SIR,—I gather from a leader in the *Times* of to-day that M. Perrin—as quoted by M. Sarcey—attributes what he calls the "comparative failure" of *Le Sphinx* to certain shortcomings in the *mise-en-scène*. As far as my memory serves me this new-born hunger for scenic splendour at the Théâtre Français is hardly ten years old, and it dates from the introduction of certain plays upon that classic stage which many critics think are unworthy of the *répertoire* and the actors. I have fooled away as much money as most managers in what is called *mise-en-scène*, and in a theatre which pays a liberal annuity to the State instead of being partially supported by the State with a liberal subvention. In undertaking to put 42 pieces, more or less, on the Gaiety stage in the space of six weeks, it is obvious that I could only afford to mount them respectably, especially when I have to pay over £300 per night for working expenses. As a matter of fact, *Le Sphinx* was played to one of the largest houses of the French season.

JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

Gaiety Theatre, Strand, June 25.

When Madame Bernhardt sent in her resignation to the "Society"—a resignation I fully expected—I had to explain that it did not affect the existing contract :—

THE COMÉDIE FRANÇAISE IN LONDON.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "TIMES."

SIR,—The paragraph in the *Times* to-day relative to the resignation of Mdlle. Sarah Bernhardt has been misunderstood by a large portion of the public interested in the French plays. Will you allow me to state that the resignation in question does not affect, and is not meant to affect, the performances now drawing towards a conclusion at the Gaiety.

JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

Gaiety Theatre, Strand, June 30.

The next made the best possible defence for the dressing-rooms, which were defective, but above the average. Of course they were not built for a company of "stars," each one wanting a separate cabinet :—

THE GAIETY THEATRE AGAIN.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "TIMES."

SIR,—Your Paris correspon[dent] ...tter to-day quotes a passage from a lively young French j[ournalist] ... the *Globe*, which is only an echo of one of M. Sarcey's let[ters] ...*mps* or the *XIXème Siècle*, reflecting upon certain alleged ...n the dressing-rooms of the Gaiety Theatre. As far as I ... the writer in the *Globe* was never within the walls of the th[eatre] ...I. Sarcey, during his stay in London, almost lived with the ... the Comédie Française, and had abundant opportunity of tes[ting] ...e of their complaints. At the Théâtre Français in Paris eac[h] ...s the privilege of furnishing his or her room at his or her ... ccording to his or her taste. At a theatre in London, whe[n] ...n a visit, the most they can expect is cleanliness, ventila[tion], ... fect sanitary arrangements ; and these they get.

It may be some comfort to the discontented members of the Comédie Française, if any such exist, to know that in the despised rooms the late Mr. Charles Mathews passed the last three years of his life ; that Mr. Toole, the late Mr. Phelps, and the late Mr. Alfred Wigan lived in them for periods varying from six to two years ; and that artistes like Miss Neilson, Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, Mr. Santley, Mr. Hermann Vezin, Mr. and Mrs. Boucicault, and Mr. Irving have borne them for lesser periods without much murmuring.

JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

Gaiety Theatre, July 7th.

The next stated figures to check idle gossip and misrepresentation :—

THE COMEDIE FRANÇAISE IN LONDON.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "TIMES."

SIR,—As a number of small and irresponsible French journalists—the camp followers of the Comédie Française—are very likely to publish exaggerated estimates of the receipts of the Gaiety Theatre during the late French season, it may be as well to anticipate such estimates by giving the exact figures. The forty-two performances yielded a sum of £19,805 14*s.* 6*d.* The thirty-six night representations produced an average of £470 for each representation, and the six matinées produced a similar average of £466 ; the general average for the forty-two representations being £472. The largest "house" was £571, when *Hernani* was

played, and the smallest £349, when *Tartufe* and *La Joie fait Peur* were played. The *Sphinx*—much abused by the Press—was played three times, to an average of £532 each representation. If this is considered a sign of the degradation of public taste, it may comfort many people to know that the performances of *L'Avare* and the *Femmes Savantes*, supported in each case by *L'Etincelle*, produced respectively £471 and £479, although they contained no "star" performer and no sensational scene. It is a curious fact that *L'Ami Frits*—the anti-Malthusian drama, so liberally supplied with real food, a real cherry tree, a real pump with real water, and all the flesh-pots of the theatrical Egypt—should have produced nearly as much in one representation as it produced in one week at the Gaiety Theatre in 1877, the chief character in each case having been represented by the same actor. This is a proof, if any is needed, that the *prestige* of the Comédie Française as a *troupe d'ensemble* is worth something after all.

JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

July 13th, 1879.

Bearing on these figures, I may quote the *Daily News*, July 14, 1879:—

Mr. Hollingshead's original proposal, as appears in the published minutes of the meetings of the French Committee in November and December of last year, was to pay for each representation a fixed sum of £148 (3,700 francs), and to hand over besides two-thirds of all receipts above £200 (5,000 francs). If this proposal had been accepted it is now certain that the share of the French company would have been greater by more than £4,000 than it has been. The administration, however, in the exercise of its discretion, declined all risk, and insisted upon a reply without any delay to its original demand of an absolute and guaranteed payment of £240 (6,000 francs) for each representation —a sum considerably in excess of the average receipts of the Théâtre Français. As the largest audiences at the Gaiety Theatre, in ordinary times, yield little more than £200, it is obvious that these terms, to which the English management were finally induced to accede, rendered it absolutely necessary to raise considerably the ordinary prices of admission, always a hazardous experiment, above all, in June and July, when theatrical enterprise is at its lowest ebb. Under these conditions, it is hardly surprising that when last year a share in this venture was offered successively to three experienced London managers, each and all declined on the ground of the high terms exacted by the French Committee, and their refusal to accept any arrangement contingent on success. The writer of the scurrilous supplement recently devoted to this subject by the Paris paper *Le Globe*, who speaks of "un vol," and complains of the "petite portion du gateau" awarded to the French company, seems to have forgotten that considerable risks should involve at least a possibility of considerable gains.

The tone of the English and French press produced the inevitable rejoinder from a leading Parisian journalist :—

THE PARIS "FIGARO," JUNE 26TH, 1894, ON THE COMÉDIE FRANÇAISE IN LONDON.—"Does it not strike you that this migration of the Comédie Française to London has assumed an extravagant importance? Will it not be said that the whole of intellectual, political, scientific, artistic, and industrial France revolves around these ladies and gentlemen of the Rue Richelieu? They are, without a doubt, highly talented artists : some amongst their number without equals. We have already told them so, we repeat it now, and are ready to reiterate it to eternity. But it finally becomes tiresome when one cannot open a newspaper without finding half-a-dozen columns devoted to artists who figure in the French Budget to amuse English people. For a whole month past Sarah Bernhardt has not spoken a couplet, Coquelin not made a gesture, nor Maubant declaimed, without the papers publishing bulletins about it. One would think that Parisian life in its entirety depends upon the Comédie Française, and that the Great City has been dismal and dismayed since Molière's nephews and nieces crossed the channel. Paris appears to be nothing more than the suburbs of London . . . . The din, however, which reaches us just now from the *coulisses* at length wears out our nerves. The Comédie Française, in especial, pretends to an importance that, however glorious the traditions of Molière's company, exceeds all due proportion to this old Paris of ours, which, luckily, is too rich in *artistes* of worth, in music as well as in letters, painting and sculpture, to allow talented performers to regard themselves as the incarnation of French genius. These noisy actors must be brought back to their proper level, which, in all respects, ranks below that of the creative genius of the writers who supply the pabulum for their renown. It is high time that common sense should step in and administer a good *douche* to these brains overheated by success. The Comédie Française apparently desires to form the axis round which our entire civilisation is to revolve ; it is already more than a mere institution ; bit by bit it is striving to raise itself to the rank of the great bodies of the State. I should be in no way surprised should the pretension issue from some corner of the *coulisses*, that the return of the Théâtre Français ought to coincide with the re-entry of the public powers into Paris. Here you have the *tableau*. To the right M. Martel, to the left M. Gambetta, and, between the two Presidents of the Chambers, Miss Sarah Bernhardt.—ALBERT WOLFF."

CHAPTER XXI.

Another theatrical banquet and speech—American rumours—No French ribbons.

DURING the *Comédie Française* season, about the end of June, another banquet of the Royal General Theatrical Fund was held, at which I spoke as follows:—

Mr. Chairman—though I should much prefer to say David James—Ladies, and Gentlemen, I cannot rise on this occasion and take quite such ground as my friend Mr. David James has taken. I confess I appear before you to-night in somewhat of a humiliating position. I cannot compare myself to a Chancellor of the Exchequer asking for some grant of money wherewith to make up some deficiences in the national accounts. On the contrary, notwithstanding all the convivial surroundings of this room, the candles, the flowers, the unripe strawberries, and other festivities, I feel very much as if I were in the Gray's Inn or the Guildhall Coffee House speaking over a table covered with green baize, liberally supplied with quills and large inkstands, addressing a meeting of creditors and proposing to pay, I am sorry to say, as we have paid, the humiliating dividend of 14*s.* in the pound. It is very easy to say we have reduced some annuities from £90 to £60, from £60 to £40, and from £30 to £20 a year. If we had reduced the ages of the annuitants we should have been delighted. I know I should have been delighted if you had reduced my age 33 per cent. But, unfortunately, this is a very serious matter to them—more so than we really see—and I, having made a few francs out of this French season, shall be happy to give £25 to the Fund, and I hope someone else will come forward and make the amount up. I do not know what the deficiency may be, but probably it will be about £700, and if that £700 is made up to those annuitants, I have no doubt it will produce a great deal of comfort in their homes. There is no doubt this Institution is founded on a radically wrong basis as a benefit society. When Mr. James tells you, as I feel is quite within the fact, that we have only 126 subscribers and fifty-one annuitants, I think all of you who are men of business will know what that will lead to. Unfortunately, during the last six months, I am just told by the Secretary, we have had four or five annuitants suddenly put upon our lists who represent a drawing capacity of £500 a year. That represents a deficit in our accounts. But there are certain manipulations going on with regard to our Lacy

Fund. Though I am Treasurer of this Fund, I do not know much about the Lacy Fund. I have had so little to do in my life with real property of all kinds that what they are doing with the Lacy Fund I do not understand, but I believe in two years certain payments were made out of the funds of the Association which places the Lacy Fund in our hands, an increasing income of £400 a year. All I can say is I am very glad to hear it. Well, now, ladies and gentlemen, having dealt with these very dry facts and figures, if you will allow me I will finish my speech by taking a theme in my hands which you will all receive with pleasure, the toast of "Literature." There is present who has more claims than I have to propose this toast, and I should feel offended that I have taken it out of his hands, I have been that for fifteen or sixteen years of my life, if I did not add [illegible] enduring literature of the world, I certainly paid rates and taxes and got a family by writing for the magazines and newspapers of the day, and during that time I worked under the direction of the late Charles Dickens and Mr. Thackeray and other gentlemen of import[illegible]e in this country, and, I believe, worked to their satisfaction. [illegible]up literature, and took to my present employment of a theatrical [illegible]r, because I had a theory that every literary man—certainly myself—[illegible] like a barrel-organ, which has a certain number of tunes to play, and when the tunes are played the organ ought to leave off. After some fifteen years' writing, I felt I had said all I had to say, and if I had gone on fifteen years more I could not say more. I thought it was time I should strike my tent, and go into another field of employment. Ladies and gentlemen, you will not feel offended if I couple this toast with the name of my old and esteemed friend, Mr. Charles Dickens. Having worked so harmoniously for many years on the staff of *Household Words*, it is only fair I should couple his name with the toast. It is not given to many of us, as it has been given to Mr. Dickens, to have had an illustrious father. I am not sure that that is an advantage. If my father had been William Shakespeare, I think if my name had been also Shakespeare, I certainly should not have gone in for dramatic authorship, and I think it a great credit to Mr. Dickens that he has not allowed himself to be overshadowed by the name of his illustrious father. I do not think there is anybody in this room who will contradict me when I say that I thoroughly believe that, next to Shakespeare, there is no writer of imaginative literature in this country who is entitled to so much consideration as Mr. Dickens's late father. Mr. Dickens was called upon suddenly, on the lamented death of his father, to take the conduct of the celebrated journal that his father left to him, and in conducting that and in other great enterprises he has proved himself a gentleman and a sensible man. I can say no more than that. It is a peculiar and melancholy fact in connection with the theatrical profession that whatever they do perishes with them. They die, and they can leave nothing behind them except the friendship of friends and the admiration of the people. Mr. Dickens has distinguished himself lately by publishing two volumes commemorative of the late Charles Mathews. I have not had time to read them, but I can say with regard to Mr. Charles Mathews that no actor on the

English stage within the last thirty or forty years has had so distinctive a position as the late Charles Mathews, and I am glad to find that Mr. Dickens's volume has come out as a fitting memorial of that accomplished gentleman and distinguished actor. I will not detain you longer, but will conclude by proposing the toast "Literature," coupling with it the name of Mr. Charles Dickens.

A rumour that I was going to America at the close of the French plays produced the following complimentary notice in the *New York Tribune*:—

Mr. John Hollingshead, the manager of the Gaiety Theatre, London, will, we are informed, shortly make a trip to New York. There is no member of the theatrical world abroad who would be received here with a kinder welcome. Mr. Hollingshead is a veteran in the pursuits of journalism and the stage, a scholar, a strong and brilliant writer, and one of the most charming companions of the more elegant club life of London. As a dramatic critic he belongs to the old school of Oxenford—so well represented now, in the British capital, by Joseph Knight, Charles Dunphie, and E. L. Blanchard. As a theatrical manager he has steadily respected and fostered the best interests of the stage, and, in the independent and judicious conduct of his theatre, has made many salutary reforms. The customs of London theatres are, in many respects, stupid and troublesome. The Gaiety is one of the few theatres there in which the visitor is made comfortable, and not annoyed or plundered. We know not what professional significance may be attached to Mr. Hollingshead's visit to the United States at this time. Perhaps it may prove the forerunner of the coming of Mr. Irving—an incident greatly to be wished. Personally, it will give great pleasure in theatrical and social circles.

After the close of the French plays there was some talk of presenting me, and my able lieutenant, Mr. M. L. Mayer, with a bit of red ribbon, but the resignation of Madame Bernhardt, the open discontent of M. Coquelin, with M. Sarcey's articles in the *Temps*, and the remarks of other journalists who thought that the "Society" as a trading organisation had been diplomatically defeated by the English shopkeeper, saved me from that honour. I was rewarded in another direction. In acknowledgment of my exertions (with others) in trying to put International Copyright on an honourable basis, and prevent foreign authors being robbed in open daylight, I was, thanks to M. Edmond About,

made an honorary member of the "Société des Gens de Lettres" of France. Of course I was not responsible for the discontent of the Théâtre Français' "stars"; that was the natural outcome of bringing them to England, where they soon learnt their commercial value. Even M. Got, though not a rebel, spoke seriously to the Hon. Lewis Wingfield, who had the confidence of the "Society," about coming to me to play a purely pantomimic part in something which I think was based upon the old melodrama, popular at the Victoria, and known in English as the *Idiot of the Mountain!*

CHAPTER XXII.

The Coffee Palace Association—The evangelization of the old "Vic."—The man behind the screen—Defending authors—Mr. Byron—Mr. Burnand—Henry S. Leigh—R. Reece—Meilhac and Halévy Anticipating effects that ought to have been kept for the poetic drama—First appearance of electricity on the stage in the *Arid* burlesque—Six months' critical condemnation, without the option of a fine—A few manifestoes—"The Sacred Lamp of Burlesque."

IN the thick of this French season, I had still enough undisciplined energy for outside work, and I went to the "Coffee Palace Association" with a proposition to turn the Victoria Theatre, just mentioned, in the New Cut, Lambeth (called New, like the New River, because it is old), into a Coffee-Music-Hall Palace. My friend, Dr. Ernest Hart, and his clever organising wife, were favourably impressed with the idea, and, with the aid of one or two of their committee, the following circulars were drawn up and distributed:—

No. I.

Many persons have for some time desired, and in various ways endeavoured, to provide for the working and lower middle classes recreation such as the music-hall affords, without the existing attendant moral and social disadvantages. It is believed that this may best be effected by opening music-halls in various parts of London, where the prices of admission shall be the same as at those now open, and at which a purified entertainment shall be given, and no intoxicating drinks be sold.

With this view a Company (limited) is being formed, and it is proposed to begin operations, as soon as capital enough has been subscribed, by opening one large music-hall in a central part of London, under the management of a gentleman who has had many years' experience of public amusements of all kinds.

The cost of providing the entertainments has been carefully examined, and there is every reason to believe that the ordinary prices of admission will yield a considerable profit, and the success of the Coffee Tavern Companies, in various parts of England, may be held to prove that the

profits on temperance refreshments are adequate for good business returns.

General complaints have recently been made as to the impropriety of many songs now sung at the existing music-halls, and the Home Secretary, Mr. Cross, has just addressed a circular letter on this subject to the licensing magistrates. There is every reason to believe that the necessary music licences, now refused in all cases by the magistrates to new applicants for ordinary music-halls, will be readily granted to this Company for the purposes specifi

It is not proposed to provide f er class of audience than that which at present frequents mus ut only to offer that class an entertainment which shall amuse grading them, and to which men may take their wives and n ithout shaming or harming them.

Communications may be address o Miss Cons, Walmer Castle Coffee Tavern, 136, Seymour Place gware Road.

No. II.

The present Company has been formed to provide several large music-halls in various parts of London, at which a purified entertainment shall be given, and no intoxicant drinks be sold.

The popularity of music-halls is shown by the fact that in London alone, to say nothing of the large provincial towns, they exist, as compared with theatres, in the proportion of eight to one.

The visitors at these places are essentially family visitors; that is to say, men go to them and take their wives and children, whereas if they go to a public-house or a coffee tavern they generally go alone.

It has long been felt that the influence of the existing music-halls is for the most part far from elevating or refining. General complaints have recently been made as to the impropriety of many songs now sung at these places, and the present Home Secretary, Mr. Cross, has just addressed a circular letter on this subject to the licensing magistrates.

Many persons have for some time desired, and in various ways endeavoured, to provide for the working and lower middle classes recreation such as the music-hall affords without the existing attendant moral and social disadvantages.

The present is an effort to supply such places of amusement for the working and lower middle classes on a sound business footing and under experienced management.

The necessary music licences, now refused in all cases by the magistrates to new applicants for ordinary music-halls, will, there is every reason to believe, be readily granted to this Company for the purposes specified.

Two of the most successful music-halls in the north of England have been conducted for years upon temperance principles. The profits derived from the sale of intoxicating drinks are not much larger than the profits derived from the sale of temperance beverages.

The cost of providing the entertainments has been carefully examined, and there is every reason to believe that ordinary prices of admission

will yield a considerable profit, while the profits from the sale of temperance refreshments may be taken as not less than those realised by the Coffee Taverns' Companies.

A gentleman—one of the provisional board—who has had more than thirty years' experience of public amusements of all kinds, has offered to take the post of managing director of the entertainments.

The scheme was not matured without some difficulty, and eventually I found that my connection with the Gaiety Theatre was not considered a good and safe qualification for me to take a leading part in carrying out my idea. Being a philosopher, I left it in the capable hands of Miss Cons, and have watched its rise and well-deserved progress with that interest which an abandoned parent takes in the career of a prosperous and proper child.

None of my authors could complain of the way in which I defended their work, and while defending the writers—in my own peculiar way—I occasionally defended the actors.

Mr. Byron was often in need of my championship. Here is an advertisement:—

ONE HUNDRED AND FOURTH NIGHT OF "LITTLE DON CÆSAR."—From the *Times*, on the first night:—"Mr. Terry did not strike us as very amusing, though he did his best . . . . The burlesque was very much on a par with the very bad farce that preceded it."

THREE HUNDRED AND TWELFTH TIME OF MISS FARREN'S SONG.—The *Times*, on the first night:—"Much of the enjoyment appeared to be derived from some antics with a feather, with which Miss Farren accompanied an extraordinarily stupid song."

Here is a frisky manifesto:—

TO THE PUBLIC.

Historical and scientific investigations are often more destructive of romance than the most irreverent productions of the reckless burlesque writer. As history has tracked St. George—the Patron Saint of England—until it has settled that he was a meat salesman at Marseilles who provided the British Army with very inferior compressed beef at a very high contract price, so science has ruthlessly rubbed the bloom off the pretty legend of the *Somnambula*, and decided that Amina was nightly suffering from a surfeit of Périgord pie. Mr. Henry J. Byron, more respectful to the legend than science has been, has put the dyspepsia into what, after all, was probably the right system, and has left the

pretty heroine of the story (and her lover Elvino) entirely free from this very unromantic imputation. In a part of the world where truffles can be had for asking no one can say that Mr. Byron has violated probability in making one of his characters (I decline to say which in this place) behave as he does behave, especially as Mr. Wilkie Collins, whose powers of observation and patient research are universally admitted, has felt justified in using the same physical phenomena with less likely people on less [illegible] cellent novel and drama called *The Moonstone*. [illegible] of time it may be found that Mr. Byron's drama[illegible] delicacy have led him to give what may possibly [illegible]e version of the legend which he has now re-nam[illegible] *the Lively Little Alessio.*

JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

Mr. Henry S. I[illegible]ful author of the *Carols of Cockay*[illegible]rney-work for me in adapting a Fr[illegible] supported him to the best of my ab[illegible]

GAIETY.—NOTICE.—"THE GREAT [illegible]IR."—This piece contains a very scanty display of legs and no [illegible]-flap breakdowns. Miss Farren, having recovered from the hoarseness and debility of the first night, is able to do justice to her part, and the general musical execution of the work is about equal to that of the *Princess of Trebizonde*, the first piece of its kind ever produced in England, and produced at the Gaiety Theatre. The "opinions of the Press" on *The Great Casimir* are so diametrically opposed to each other that it would only make the Press look ridiculous to quote them. If the public continue to support the piece to the extent they have done it will be kept in the bills, if not (as usual at this theatre) it will disappear at an hour's notice.

Mr. F. C. Burnand (well able to defend himself, being an "able editor") allowed me to defend him from the charge of desecrating one of Shakespeare's most delicate creations:—

GAIETY.—Fifteenth year and number thirty-seven of a form of entertainment which, though said to be beneath criticism, generally provokes more criticism and critics than any other theatrical production.

GAIETY.—Notice.—Whatever the success of *Ariel* may be—and, judging by its reception by nightly representative audiences of nearly two thousand persons, drawn from all classes, this promises to be very great—the piece must be changed on the return of Mr. E. Terry and other members of the company. No seats can be booked beyond Dec. 8.

GAIETY, *Ariel*, Measured by the Money Standard—the only standard that anybody, following Shakespeare's example, seems really to value,

has been a success. In nine weeks it has coaxed the public out of 50,000 American dollars.

GAIETY.—Mr. F. J. Furnivall, Secretary of the New Shakespeare Society, writes Dec. 5:—"I saw Mr. Burnand's *Ariel* last night, and enjoyed the pretty music, dresses, and dances, and the brightness of the whole play, and had some good laughs at some of the situations and jokes. I don't think that Shakespeare himself, had he been there, could have done anything else than enjoy the evening, and I can no more understand any lover of his feeling hurt at the performance than I can any great admirer of Mr. Gladstone's (and I am one) being offended at the capital double of him on your stage. Sure I am that Shakespeare would have admired the performance of Mr. Elton as Caliban. It was capital. The man is a true actor, and the joke of that transformation of his in the last act would have made Shakespeare roar." Mr. Furnivall objects more to mutilations of Shakespeare during legitimate performances of the play than he does to frank burlesques, and he gives permission to use his letter.

This piece is remarkable for the fact that in it I first introduced the electric light on the stage as part of Miss Farren's costume. A lament was published that a low burlesque theatre should be the first to introduce a poetic effect which all future pure legitimate managers, producing Shakespeare with awe and reverence, would have to copy!

Mr. Robert Reece I had to defend for carrying out my suggestion (I cannot call it my invention) of three-act burlesques:—

GAIETY—"ALADDIN."—A favourable specimen of the new school of burlesque, in which artistic dancing is substituted for the cellar-flap breakdown, in which the music is carefully selected, and executed in a way worthy of comic opera, and in which gracefully designed costumes take the place of the old red, green, and blue abominations.

GAIETY.—"ALADDIN."—Neither obstinate fogs nor carefully nurtured fire panics have affected the success of this piece. The average receipts for 44 performances have been £203 for each representation, as against £185 for the *Forty Thieves*.

I defended myself (and the French authors) first, and my chief actress next, because I thought it was necessary when the *Grasshopper* was produced and revised:—

MR. WHISTLER AND "THE GRASSHOPPER."—Mr. John Hollingshead writes from the Gaiety Theatre, Strand:—"Mr. Whistler's consent was asked before he was painted; he attended the last

rehearsal and approved of the dialogue. This is an age of caricatures. I, for one, don't see why the stage should be debarred from doing what is being done in literature and the press every hour; and I, for one, shall extend this liberty of the stage at every available opportunity."—From the *Daily News*, Dec. 14, 1877.

GAIETY.—Needless comparisons have been made between the acting of Miss Farren and Madame Chaumont, which are based upon two misconceptions. In the first place, the original drama from which *The Grasshopper* is taken is not a pathetic piece, and every grain of pathetic writing in the French version has been carefully preserved in the English. In the next place, Madame Chaumont's method is not so much the result of intellectual or instinctive design as of physical necessity. She is a delicate woman as well as a delicate actress. The part of the Grasshopper would probably have been played by Madame Chaumont very much as Miss Farren plays it, if Madame Chaumont had possessed Miss Farren's lightness of feet and animal spirits. This difference of interpretation is not now seen for the first time. It was shown in Miss Farren's representation of *A Nice Girl* as distinguished from Madame Chaumont's performance in *Le Wagon des Dames*. In the same way the part of Flippit would probably, to the delight of the French authors, have been played by M. Dupuis with the light eccentricity of Mr. Terry, if M. Dupuis had possessed or cultivated this quality of acting. But M. Dupuis is the spoiled darling of the Parisian public, and for ten years—ever since the performance of Fritz in *The Grand Duchess*—he has been encouraged in the mannerism of an inflated drill-sergeant. There is an enormous amount of parrot cant in England about the superiority of French acting. A certain quantity of School Board criticism has been expended upon the English title of the play. *The Grasshopper* may not be an exact philological equivalent for *La Cigale*, but what of that? If *La Cigale* had meant *Colorado Beetle*, the adapter would still have taken the title of *Grasshopper*. His object was to find a good, sound, wholesome, popular English name that would represent a free creature, jumping from field to field, and living in the open air, and *The Grasshopper* certainly answers this purpose.

My annual "Notices to the Public," on the anniversary of the opening of the theatre, were dignified by the Press with the name of manifestos. They might have been called pronunciamientos. The first in the subjoined list obtained celebrity, because of a phrase it contained, "The Sacred Lamp of Burlesque." This phrase appears to have become historical in theatrical journalism.

TO THE PUBLIC.

To-day (Monday), December 20, 1880, the Gaiety Theatre will complete its twelfth year. During these twelve years I have kept it open

every night, with the exception of ten weeks, and against these ten weeks I have given 500 matinées, or performances equal to one year and two-thirds of a year of nightly representations. Throughout my management I have always endeavoured to keep the sacred lamp of burlesque burning. There have been short periods in the career of the Gaiety when this lamp has been put on one side, though never extinguished. The long engagement of Mr. and Mrs. Boucicault, the return of Mr. Charles Santley to so-called English opera, the last brilliant performances of the late Charles Mathews, the varied and final appearances of the late Samuel Phelps, the French plays, the *Comédie Française*, &c., have pushed the lighter forms of dramatic entertainment from their stools for a time—but only for a time. The regular burlesque company of the Gaiety has always been acknowledged as the strongest in London, but the more serious dramatic efforts at this theatre have had the advantage of many powerful combinations. The late Mr. Alfred Wigan, the late Miss Neilson, Mr. Clayton, and others frequently played together in the same pieces. A drama of Mr. Byron's, which ran more than 100 nights, was represented by Mr. Toole, Mr. Clayton, Miss Neilson, Miss Litton, and Mr. Henry Irving; one of the old comedies was revived with Mr. Phelps, Mr. Vezin, Mr. L. Brough, Mr. Charles Mathews, and Mr. Toole in the principal parts, and a Shakesperian play, which ran for a considerable period, was represented by Mr. Phelps, Mr. Arthur Cecil, Mr. Vezin, Mr. Righton, Mr. Belford, Mr. J. G. Taylor, Mr. Forbes Robertson, the late Miss Furtado, Miss Rose Leclercq, and Mrs. John Wood, with a song by Algernon Swinburne, and original music by Arthur Sullivan. Mr. W. S. Gilbert produced his first comedy at the Gaiety, and collaborated for the first time in a comic musical piece with Mr. Arthur Sullivan, while the late Mr. Compton made his last appearance on the stage in a few matinées at the same theatre, playing Mawworm in the *Hypocrite*, with Mr. Phelps as Dr. Cantwell. Long runs have been the exception at the Gaiety, and infinite variety the rule, the variety covering the whole area of dramatic entertainments.

JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

TO THE PUBLIC.

To-day (Wednesday), December 21, 1881, will complete my thirteenth year at the Gaiety Theatre, and during this time the house has only been closed ten weeks, while against these ten weeks I have given 610 matinées, which are equal to two full years of nightly performances. Many theatres may have given better—none can have given more varied—entertainments during this time, while no London theatre, past or present, can show such a record of continuous work. As I announced nearly a year ago, I shall produce on Saturday night, December 24, a burlesque-drama, in three acts, by Mr. Robert Reece, on the subject of *Aladdin*, being No. 3 of these very popular Gaiety pieces. In this Mr. Edward Terry, who has had no part in *Whittington*, will make his reappearance after his long provincial tour.

The series of three-act burlesque dramas will be continued, and *Blue Beard*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Valentine and Orson*, the *Sleeping Beauty*, &c., are amongst the subjects under consideration. The ninth season of French plays will begin Monday, May 29, for six weeks, and will include M. Coquelin, and a company selected from the Théâtre Français for his repertoire. Madame Sarah Bernhardt will follow, and the season will terminate with an important engagement, not yet finally settled.

The Gaiety Theatre is as safe as any London theatre can be from accident by fire; no theatre can provide against the effects of panic. The two magnificent exits which once communicated with the adjoining enormous pile of buildings are still bricked up by Act of Parliament. This is another idiotic result of Government slap-you-and-put-you-to-bed legislation. As I have no more pecuniary interest in the Gaiety Restaurant than I have in St. Paul's Cathedral, I can decently ask the public to assist me in breaking down these dangerous barriers.

JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

TO THE PUBLIC.

To-day (Thursday), December 21, 1882, the Gaiety Theatre completes its fourteenth year. I opened it on December 21, 1868, and I have kept it open every night, with the exception of ten weeks or sixty nights, for fourteen years. Against these sixty nights I have given 673 matinées, or performances that are equal to two years and a quarter of incessant nightly work. I have taken from the public at the Gaiety alone in those fourteen years about £544,000. I have paid the State, in rates and taxes, about £16,000. Literature, through its distant relatives, the dramatic authors, has received about £30,000; the Press, in the shape of advertisements, has received about £40,000; and the dramatic profession has received from me about £300,000. The Church has not allowed itself to be forgotten, and the Rector's rate of St. Mary-le-Strand has been punctually demanded and punctually paid. No London theatre, as I have said before, can show such a record of obstinate, continuous work, which has been done without shop-bills, sandwich-men, posters, frantic advertisements, and mainly without quoted or quotable newspaper notices. I ought, perhaps, to apologise to the gentlemen of the Press for the pain I have doubtless given them by producing so many three-act burlesque dramas, but the public—a large general public, as shown by the £544,000 receipts—appear to find a pleasure in this form of entertainment, and I have a large and valuable company well skilled in supplying it. Our French plays afford an agreeable change after the autumnal and winter burlesques, and at our numerous matinées we occasionally dabble in the Wardour Street and Sunday School drama. The theatre as a structure has been surveyed by the Metropolitan Board of Works, and they have induced the owners to spend a certain amount of money on builders and architects. The twenty-two exits into four different streets, which the theatre had when it was built, have not been added to or diminished. After what has occurred in Berlin with an

iron curtain, and in a town of Hungary with alternate oil lamps, the public will perhaps think I was wise in having my doubts about these panic-born contrivances. The two doors on the dress-circle and upper-box levels, which once communicated with the grand exit staircases in the adjoining restaurant, are still bricked up, as they were in 1873, by pot-house legislation.

JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

TO THE PUBLIC.

Friday, December 21, the Gaiety theatre completed its fifteenth year. During this time—almost an unbroken "season"—the house has only been closed ten weeks, and has given as a set-off 789 matinées. Put in another form, the theatre has been closed only four nights a year, and has given an extra performance or matinée during every week of its existence. When the theatre was built for me in 1868, it was called the Gaiety—a title that I accepted as part of the lease. Such a title naturally encourages a light and festive entertainment. Opinions differ as to this form of art, and what I dignify by the name of Pantagruelism, another gentleman may call grinning through a horse-collar. Having the Gaiety, however, and not the Mausoleum Theatre, I am not surprised to find that I have produced thirty short burlesques, seven three-act burlesques, one lengthy Christmas piece, two morning pantomimes, besides being a pioneer in the direction of opera-bouffe. Mixed with this, in the proportion of about one to two, I have had ten seasons of French plays, representing nearly every form of French dramatic art, and many similar seasons of English and Anglo-French comedy. I have never gone out of my way to solicit newspaper support, nor have I ever interfered with a newspaper contributor in the discharge of his duty; but I have always exercised my right of answering what I considered unfair "notices." I hope my "answers" have not overstepped the bounds of fair controversy. They have generally been confined to the correction of matters of fact, or the errors of uninspired prophecy. I must be excused if I do not think I am responsible for the paralysis of one actor or the well-known and well-advertised three months' absence of another. That the public are satisfied is proved by the vitality of the theatre. This public, I am told, are all "mashers." If by "masher" is meant a playgoer who thinks for himself, this theory may be right, but if it means the modern dandy it is decidedly wrong. A theatre which, unlike most theatres, has been kept open almost night and day for fifteen years, which during that time has taken and expended between six and seven hundred thousand pounds, can hardly find its main support in a score or more of eccentric young gentlemen, who are neither remarkable for money nor social influence. If the Press, instead of wasting its valuable ink on this phantom of the imagination, would aid me in opening the bricked-up exits between the theatre and the restaurant, they would do the public—mashers included—a substantial service, and remove a disgrace to every licensing, official, parochial, and Government authority in London.

December, 1883. JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Palmy day performances—*George Barnwell* and the *Castle Spectre*—Views as to theatrical management, contributed to Edmund Yates's magazine—Press comments.

I HAD not got far into my thirteenth year of management before I thought of giving a few matinées to show some of the masterpieces which were performed at the Two Patent Theatres. These theatres, or rather their special privileges, were dead, and it would have been unkind to attack them if they had not left a large body of worshippers behind them, who still asserted that free trade had degraded the drama. I called these matinées sometimes "Educational," but more frequently "Palmy Day Performances, for the Instruction of Dramatic Critics and lovers of Theatrical Art." I started like an opera manager with a repertory which I never got through, and never thought I should get through. It included Matthew Lewis's *Castle Spectre* and *Wood Demon*, Sotherne's *Oroonoko*, Colman's *Mountaineers*, Murphy's *Upholsterer* and *Grecian Daughter*, Steele's *Tender Husband* and *Conscious Lovers*, Lillo's *George Barnwell*, Rowe's *Jane Shore* and *Fair Penitent*, Bickerstaffe's *Lionel and Clarissa*, Dr. Moore's *Foundling*, Cibber's *Lady's Last Stake* and *She Would and She Would Not*, Hughes's *Siege of Damascus*, Pocock's *Miller and his Men*, and Sheridan's version of Kotzebue's *Pisarro*.

I announced the series as follows :—

TO THE PUBLIC.

At a period when the London stage is more distinguished for revivals than for original productions, it has occurred to me that a few afternoon performances of certain neglected dramas, like *George Barnwell*, *The Castle Spectre*, *Pisarro*, &c., may give the playgoers of to-day an idea of the dramatic works that were witnessed by their grandfathers, and relied upon to sustain the fortunes of the two protected monopolist

theatres. The difficulty will probably be to get actors and actresses to treat these productions with becoming respect, but this is a matter of selection and stage management. These performances will take place every Wednesday, commencing Wednesday after-noon, April 21st, with *George Barnwell.*

JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

George Barnwell bore the test of the modern foot-lights better than I expected, and Mrs. Bernard Beere (who had made her first appearance on the stage at a Gaiety matinée) was so impressed with the character of Millwood that she at once spoke to Mr. W. G. Wills, who was present, about modernising the play for her to "star" in. Mr. Wills was a man of undoubted genius, but of dilatory habits, and he had probably suggested as many plays to managers, and delivered skeleton plots as Lopez de Vega or H. J. Byron had written pieces. He was eccentric to the verge of slovenliness in his appearance, and encouraged many jokes about his contempt for soap and water which were doubtless imaginative products of the jocular mind. The story that he mislaid the manuscript of his great play *Charles the First*, and had given it up for lost until some one suggested it might be in his bath (where it was at last found), is only one of a dozen of such amusing fictions.

The notices of the Palmy Day Dramas were rather "mixed," and I issued the following advertisement :—

GAIETY.

Most of the notices of this performance have borne ungrudging testimony to the level excellence of the acting. In some quarters, however, it has been regretted that the old style of representation could not have been revived with Lillo's tragedy. It was thought to be more wise and respectful to play it in our modern and somewhat undemonstrative manner. *George Barnwell* was selected as a good specimen of old-fashioned work. If some of the lighter productions of the old time—the burlesques and musical spectacles, to say nothing of the tight-rope walkers and dancing elephants—had been selected to represent the "palmy days," the merits of modern burlesques would have been made a little more apparent One form of revival could not have been produced, for no actor of any position would now play Horatio, as Charles Young did, to the Hamlet of a Mannikin Roscius.

JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

I gave a short history of the play, which I now reprint:—

The play of *George Barnwell* was originally produced either under the title of *The Merchant*, or the *London Merchant* at Drury Lane Theatre, July 2, 1731, before a distinguished audience, amongst whom—a delighted spectator—was the not easily moved Mr. Alexander Pope. The critics came to laugh with the old ballad of "George Barnwell" (published about the middle of the 17th century) in their hands, but either remained to weep or pray. The piece at once secured a success, and before the 20th of August in the same year it had been played seventeen times—a marvellous run for those days. Its fame had travelled outside the theatre with such effect, that the Queen (the Consort of George II.) sent for the prompt copy of the play to read, and Mr. Wilks, the actor, had to trot down to Hampton Court with this precious manuscript. The original cast stood thus:—George Barnwell, Mr. Cibber, Jun.; Thorowgood, Mr. Bridgewater; Trueman, Mr. W. Mills; The Uncle, Mr. Roberts; Blunt, Mr. R. Witherhilt; Millwood, Mrs. Butler; Maria, Mrs. Cibber; and Lucy, Mrs. Charke. The play was repeated at the Goodman's Fields Theatre in 1731, at the Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre in 1732, at Covent Garden in 1740, at Drury Lane again in 1749, and in 1796. The cast at the latter performance comprised Charles Kemble, Aikin, Holland, R. Palmer, Packer, Mrs. Siddons, Miss Miller, and Miss Pope. The latter was a little restive about her part of Lucy. The piece was produced at the Haymarket in 1804, when the great Elliston played George Barnwell, and at Bath in 1817, when the gallows was introduced bodily on the stage in the last scene, to the great satisfaction of the critics. The author of the piece was George Lillo, an estimable City man, born February 4, 1693. He wrote, in all, eight pieces, *Fatal Curiosity*, and *Arden of Feversham*, being the best known amongst them, next to *George Barnwell*; and he died, respected and regretted, September 3, 1739. He intended *George Barnwell* to be played in Elizabethan costume, but the managers have always played it in Georgian dress. As a great moral play it has converted many felons or would-be felons, who have shown their gratitude in effusive letters, and in some cases in solid gifts of money to the actors. The present revival, I am afraid, will be too short to produce any such beneficial effect.

JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

My second "Palmy-Day" performance was more successful, from my point of view. It was the *Castle Spectre*. As a splendid specimen of the Wardour Street drama, it was received with far more merriment than any Gaiety burlesque. The following newspaper notice (*Era*, May, 1880) gives my summary of the piece:

Mr. Hollingshead admits that it is hard to have to speak ill of one's grandfathers—to question their taste and to laugh at the idols which

they tolerated and sometimes worshipped; but he justifies the harshness, and invites his patrons to repeat it. "If," he says, "we see one of these pieces now performed in the country, or at some out-lying London theatre, chiefly because it is claimed by no Dramatic Authors' Society, and is chargeable with no authors' fees, we laugh at the construction, pity the actors, and despise the taste and judgment of our grandfathers." Among the worst of these works he places "Monk" Lewis's *Castle Spectre*, with its flavour of German romance which Lewis imported into some other of his literary productions. "He loved a ghost," says the manager-essayist, "and he loved a lord; and we have, therefore, several lords and ghosts in this tragic drama. The bad lord is feudal to a fault, surrounded by conventional dependents, amongst whom are some conventional Africans. Ethiopean serenaders and Christy Minstrels had not vulgarised the black man in 1797, and, though the piece was received with some derision, the black slaves of Osmond were, probably, not the cause of this opposition." For the benefit of his patrons, Mr. Hollingshead has very kindly reproduced his own summary of the story, imagining, doubtless, that his "kind friends in front" would be more intent upon looking out for opportunities to laugh than in following the plot. And this is how he puts it:—"The story of *The Castle Spectre* is eminently sensational; it turns upon wholesale murder. Earl Osmond—the villain of the piece—after distinguishing himself in certain Scottish wars of an unknown period, has caused his elder brother and his brother's wife and child to be murdered; and has usurped Conway Castle, with all the property belonging to it. By one of those interpositions peculiar to dramas the brother and child were saved—the lady only having fallen a victim to provide a good ghost for the story. The brother, loaded with chains, and fed upon bread and water, has been immured for sixteen years in one of Earl Osmond's dungeons, without the Earl knowing it; the jailor being a dissatisfied dependent, who is a strange compound of greediness, cruelty, remorse, and pity. The child—a little girl—has grown up into the beautiful Angela, a supposed cottager's daughter, outside the castle gates, and has excited the worthy love of Percy, Earl of Northumberland, and the unworthy love of the villain, Earl Osmond. Falling into the power of the villain, this young lady becomes the mainspring of the drama, one party in Conway Castle struggling to keep her, the other party outside the castle struggling to rescue her. The underplot is filled up with three good, strong, serviceable stage characters, a fat monk, who loves flagons of wine and venison pasties; a jester, who is wise and impertinent; and an old housekeeper, who is timid and credulous. The final scene of the drama is worked up by bringing all the characters together in a gloomy dungeon. This cell is not like the humanitarian places of confinement provided by our modern prison authorities. It is feudal, and very—oh, so very gloomy! Here lies the prisoner of sixteen years, the supposed dead father of Angela. He is very like the half-starved father in Schiller's *Robbers*, though he spares us the agony of dying hard in a bedgown. In this dismal dungeon Angela, flying through subterranean passages with

the friendly monk who favours her escape, comes suddenly upon her father; here Earl Osmond, seeking his brother to murder him or see him properly murdered this time, comes suddenly upon Angela; and here Earl Percy, with his followers, having broken into the castle, arrives in time to see Osmond stabbed by Angela under the approving eye of Evelina's ghost. Angela embraces Percy, Reginald kneels to Evelina's ghost, Osmond lies on his back, and the other characters dispose themselves as effectively as possible under the glare of a little blue fire."

This closed the "Palmy-Day" representations at that time, although, as will be seen by the following advertisement, they again cropped up at intervals :—

GAIETY EDUCATIONAL MATINÉES FOR STUDENTS AND CRITICS OF DRAMATIC ART.—This (Wednesday) afternoon, the acting (not the mutilated) version of Jerrold's *Black-Eyed Susan* and Carey's old Tragi-Comedy *Chrononhotonthologos*. The version of Black-eyed Susan is the one used when Mr. and Mrs. Kendal appeared with great success at the Gaiety Theatre. At all these matinées it is impossible to mount the plays with much elaboration, in consequence of the constant change of programme. Twelve or fourteen pieces have to be played between this and Christmas. Carey's tragi-comedy was chosen in preference to Fielding's *Tom Thumb* as a sample of eighteenth-century burlesque, because it is one-third the length.

I was not neglecting my journalism in the midst of my business.

"Trading in Theatricals" (contributed originally to Edmund Yates's unsuccessful magazine, *Time*), produced the following remarks in a leading theatrical paper—the *Referee*, of May 4, 1879 :—

Mr. John Hollingshead has of late been writing of things theatrical in a style which is well worthy the consideration of all playgoers. He hints that some managers are of the *genus irritabile*, and that others are of the sarcastic order. There remains not the slightest doubt as to the party under whose banner he serves, because in his opening remarks he has a fling at the newspaper people—he belonged to them once—who leave their more serious affairs to direct the manager's faltering footsteps, and to watch over his trivialities. The first duty of the manager who is practical is, according to his theory, to sit in every seat of his house and to prepare to sacrifice anything which may come in the line of anyone's sight, whether the anyone be a boy in the sixpenny gallery or the holder of a crutch-stick and the sucker of a toothpick who may choose to locate himself in a ten-shilling stall. Having said this he will agree with me that a good many of the managers either are not practical men or have neglected their duty. I could point to some score of houses where

certain unlucky denizens of the dress circle get only a view of a fractional portion of the stage by elongating their necks to the sacrifice of all comfort, and to the waking up of angry passions and the utterance of naughty words. Then, says John, it is the duty of a manager to see that his patrons are able to breathe in his theatre; that they are not baked on one side and frozen on the other. Well, how is this done? Why in winter time at Drury Lane, when the curtain has been up, I have had the hair blown almost off my head. At the Queen's, which is now to be turned into a grocer's shop for the "benefit of clergy," I have sat and shivered, though muffled up to the ears in an ulster, and at some other houses I have, to keep out the cold, been compelled to imbibe hot and rebellious liquors that have made me slightly shaky on my pins. In summer time I have been half suffocated by the heat, and have used in one evening some half-dozen handkerchiefs to mop up the perspiration that has oozed from my pores, and have gone home damp, miserable, and starchless as to my linen. Mr. Hollingshead is down on the French theatres; and is of opinion that no sensible man ought to go to a Paris theatre without a dust-pan, a broom, a few hat-pegs, a small strip of carpet, a surgical appliance for straightening crippled or cramped legs, and a little chloride of lime or other disinfectant. He doesn't suggest anything for certain London theatres I could name, but I should say a lot of shillings and sixpences to satisfy the demands of the harpies, or a good thick stick to thrash them with, a patent gas stove in winter and a sponge bath and ventilator in summer, a flea-catcher, a few things to throw at bad actors and incompetent authors, an "extinguisher" or *extincteur* to put out the always possible conflagration, a saw to cut off the legs of the chairs that are still placed in the gangways in spite of the edict of the Lord Chamberlain, something nice to counteract the nasty flavour of certain adaptations from the French, and a drop of something wholesome in a bottle.

John's next caution comes with regard to the alliance which of late years has been entered into between the gin-shop and the theatre. He is severely down upon the hungry waiters who prowl about and suggest drinks to people who are not thirsty until it is difficult to tell where the public-house ends and the theatre begins. Very properly he protests against the custom which has led to the letting of theatrical bars to some half-amateur publican who sells bad articles at exorbitant prices and who combines with his privilege to dispose of fire-water and alcoholic poison the right to worry the public for the custody of their coats, hats, and sticks; for fees to show them to the seats they have paid for; and to force the sale of programmes at twenty times the value of paper and printing. A very proper protest this. I could tell you of somebody who is just now opening a theatre on this particular spec. "Hang the drama," says he. "We have plenty of nice bars, and some pleasant lounges, and with a sprinkling of pretty girls to dispense the stuff, we are sure to nail the swells and to make the affair pay." Fact, I assure you.

But please, dear reader of mine, don't forget the tip I gave you some time ago. When a harpy demands your coat or your stick, your hat or

your umbrella, let him have it, and when the show is over, get your goods and thank him—*but don't pay him*. Tell him you let him have them to oblige him, he seemed so anxious to mind them. He will probably be angry and say rude things, but as you will win you can afford to laugh.

Further, Mr. Hollingshead points out that a dealer in theatrical wares must put his own tastes in his pockets if he wants to put money there too, and that his gauge as to a piece must be its paying qualities. His idea of a good piece must ; his idea of a bad piece a piece that does not pay. ifty theatres in London, and only about three dramati- sh he had named them, because his statement has ible conflict of opinion. Tom Taylor will have it t Robert Reece that he is another. I fancy the ne e gentlemen who were responsible for *The* et with such a brilliant reception at "The L r. Finally, John asserts that the theatrical ma eace in the market-place will probably in the p that no particular training in literature or art, government of a theatre, but precisely those qua... iful cheesemonger.

The *Referee* was always a sensible, though a critical supporter of mine, and although I had not the pleasure of a personal acquaintance with the late lamented editor, Mr. Sampson, I cannot forget what he wrote and published, February 3, 1878 :—

There is, we will readily allow, one singular exception to this rule —there is one theatre in London where the manager himself is capable of writing a play or a criticism if necessary, where civility and order reign supreme, and where blackmailing of all kinds has been long abolished. No one can say that as an experiment the literary manager has been a failure; contrasted with some we could mention he is a conspicuous success.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A real variety theatre—The Hanlon-Lees—A journey to Paris—A sad and unexpected telegram—Mr. Lionel Lawson's sudden death—Passages of arms with "The Board of Works"—Mr. Toole (at last) becomes a manager—A short, cheap, and popular burlesque—A burlesque in four acts and twelve scenes—Successful, but too full of half-boiled humanity.

THE regular Gaiety company, if there ever was such a combination—the "Quartette" and their kaleidoscope surroundings—were, during the French occupation, sent on tour, beginning at Islington, then having a week, by Royal command, at Yarmouth before going to various important towns in the North of England. On their return they were put into a new burlesque on the subject of *Hernani*, written by Mr. Byron.

Theatrical managers of a house like the Gaiety—a restless, kaleidoscopic house—a Variety Theatre in the highest sense of the term—have to sleep with a packed portmanteau by their bedside, and live the life of Queen's messengers. No sooner was *Hernani* launched, and Lecocq's *Grand Casimir* put on the stocks, than one Friday afternoon I went off to Paris to see the first performance of the Hanlon-Lees on a Saturday night, with a view to making them an offer for England. Being in no hurry, I stayed that night at Dover. In the morning when I got up, I thought of my landlord and friend, Mr. Lionel Lawson. In the early part of the week I had seen him at a rehearsal at the theatre, and he told me I looked ill, that I worked too hard, and that I wanted a holiday. I told him I was about to take the

"showman's" usual holiday—a few days in Paris, changing an English theatre, with all its comforts, for a French theatre with all its discomforts. Before breakfast I walked down to the telegraph office at the station, and sent, in substance, the following telegram :—

Have started for Paris. Arri[illegible] Grand Hotel. Come over for a week.—JOHN HOLLINGSH[illegible]NEL LAWSON.

After breakfast I we[illegible] on board the ten o'clock boat, and arriv[illegible] is about six in the evening. At the Gran[illegible] sked for the number of my room, and was [illegible]th an English telegram which had been [illegible] all day. I opened it and read :—

TALBOT SMITH, Gaiety, to JOHN [illegible]NGSHEAD.—Lawson died suddenly early this morning. Wire instructions.

I looked at this telegram again and again. I could scarcely believe the words. I had not much time to waste, as I had to dress, and go to the theatre. I put the telegram before me on the dressing-table, to be sure that I was not mistaken. I went to the Variétés Theatre, saw the Hanlon-Lees in the *Voyage en Suisse*, and decided to engage them. On Sunday morning, I returned to England. On Monday morning I saw Sir Edward Lawson—Mr. Lionel Lawson's nephew—and was quite ready to close the theatre for a night or more as a mark of respect, but such a step was not considered necessary. Although Mr. Lionel Lawson (as I have said before) was never, in any sense, my "backer," he was always a friend, and made the theatre almost his home. Under the lease he had two private twin boxes as his own property. Being asked their annual value, I at once said, "£500 a year," and that extra rental being agreed upon, those boxes were from that time mine, and the theatre had what is called "a clear sheet."

Lionel Lawson was a man of great financial ability, an ability he cultivated with the utmost perseverance. Personally, he was indolent and nervous, but his brain was always at work, and if he made a financial mistake he never admitted it, and was strong enough in capital to "hold on," which he did with singular obstinacy and general success. He worked with several financiers, one the late Mr. Julius Beer, possessing commanding financial instinct, and it is remarkable that Mr. Beer died almost as suddenly as Mr. Lawson, and so did their friends and fellow workers, Messrs. Maurice Posno and Löwinger.

When I got to Folkestone on my return from Paris, I read this in the *Observer* :—

It is with great regret we have to announce the sudden death of Mr. Lionel Lawson, which took place at an early hour yesterday (Saturday) morning, at his residence, No. 2, Brook Street, Hanover Square. Mr. Lawson had felt unwell on the previous evening, but no apprehension was entertained as to any serious result. In the course of the night, however, the malady assumed an unexpectedly serious form, and death ensued almost instantaneously. Mr. Lawson was understood to be one of the principal proprietors of the *Daily Telegraph* newspaper, though he had never personally taken any active part in the management. He was well and favourably known in many circles of London society, and his loss will be deeply regretted by his many relatives and friends, both in London and Paris. His age was fifty-six.

The Grand Casimir, put into English by Henry S. Leigh, followed *Hernani*, while the matinées—more varied than ever—went on as usual, with a double company. *The Grand Casimir* was soon backed up by a new so-called comedy by F. C. Burnand, from the French, called *Unlimited Cash*.

The question of theatrical exits and entrances now cropped up, and I had—of course reluctantly—to "rush into print." *Daily Telegraph*, Oct. 21, 1879:—

THE BOARD OF WORKS AND THE GAIETY THEATRE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "DAILY TELEGRAPH."

SIR,—I see from reports in the public press that the Metropolitan Board of Works, acting under its new-born Parliamentary powers, has

been amusing itself by making a survey and drawing plans of the exits and entrances of the Gaiety Theatre. Knowing the construction and capabilities of this theatre, and knowing how many places of amusement there are in London that ought never to have been built, and certainly ought never to have been licensed, it seems to me that the Board of Works, in this case, is rather on the wrong scent. A theatre that has free access to four streets—east, west, north, and south—that has from three to five exit staircases on every floor, and is insured at a much lower rate than most other London playhouses, because of its fireproof structure, need give very little concern to the Board of Works or any other surveying authority.

Yours, &c.,

Oct. 19, 1879. JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

This may look like flying in the face of authority; but authority, as the Press told it, was wrong, and had to retire. I came in contact with authority again soon after, when I wished to erect a shelter along a side street to protect my pit and gallery visitors from the rain. I soon found that to apply for permission to the local Board was to be tied up with a refusal, or a reference to a committee. I erected the shelter first, and applied for permission afterwards. I was refused permission, and summoned to Bow Street. The case was adjourned. I was summoned again, to be again adjourned. After this farce of local self-government had been played for two months outside, not inside, the Gaiety, I paid certain costs and was left alone, and the shelter—like many others in London—still remains.

Mr. Burnand, not having satisfied himself with *Unlimited Cash*, produced, with his usual rapidity, a burlesque called *Robbing Roy, or Scotched and Kilt*, which met with all-round critical approval in an age which was just encouraging the revival of criticism. It was preceded every night by a substantial comedy or drama, in which Mr. H. J. Byron (back on the stage) was a leading actor.

Christmas witnessed the production at the Gaiety of a big spectacular burlesque, written by Mr. H. J. Byron and arranged by me, called *Gulliver*. Mr.

Toole had now permanently left the theatre, as his time had come (as I told him) to start in management. This time comes to every popular actor, partly because managers, however liberal, can only afford to pay a certain salary for principals, and partly owing to the natural ambition of actors to be their own managers, and have the direction of others. Mr. Toole took the little theatre near Charing Cross which was sometimes called the Charing Cross Theatre and sometimes the Folly. Mr. Toole made certain alterations, much needed, and stamped the house with his name. It still exists as Toole's.

Robbing Roy had been a cheap burlesque, simple in costumes and scenery; *Gulliver*, in four acts and twelve scenes, was more pretentious. The scenic artists were Mr. Beverly, Mr. Grieve, Mr. F. Lloyds, Mr. Perkins, and Mr. Hann; the ballets were arranged by Mr. Dauban, the costumes were supplied by M. Alias, and in the cast were Miss Farren, Miss Kate Vaughan, Miss Gilchrist, Miss Louis, and Miss Wadman, and Mr. Terry, Mr. Royce, Mr. Elton, and Mr. Squires (four low comedians), many recruits from the music halls, and about one hundred children. During the run of the piece, which was very successful and much praised, nearly four hundred people, men, women, and children, entered the stage door every night, until the place was crammed with half-boiled humanity. I was not sorry to find a sound excuse for withdrawing the piece, even before its popularity was altogether exhausted.

CHAPTER XXV.

Plica again—Cry Pal The Olympic literary drama, by Walter E an he "Hunchback" burlesqued by Burnand- the Gaiety, and the Gaiety company at the berammergau—The Passion play.

I WAS sufferi attack of *Plica Napoleonica*. I as pantomime at the Crystal P iant Killer — and I acquired from hs the control of the Olympic Theatre, wh roduced an original comedy-drama by Walter Be nt and James Rice, called *Such a Good Man*. The company consisted of Mr. Righton, Mr. Macklin, Mr. Maclean, Mr. Beveridge Mrs. Leigh, Miss Nelly Bromley, and Miss Fanny Josephs. Mr. Penley, Mr. David Fisher, Junior, and others were subsequently engaged, and they appeared in a burlesque prepared by Mr. F. C. Burnand on the subject of the "Hunchback," with the rest of the company, strengthened, for burlesque purposes, by Miss Edith Bruce, Miss Lizzie Coote, Miss Bella Howard, and others. Mr. Brookfield had just joined the Gaiety company, to gain stage experience, and as I had nothing else for him to do I gave him a part, which he was quite content to play, in the Crystal Palace pantomime. When Mr. Bancroft singled him out and offered him a Haymarket engagement I made him go, almost against his will, as I considered it to be the first real step in his promising career. When *Such a Good Man* was withdrawn, I put up Bronson Howard's and Frank Marshall's *Brighton*, and engaged Mr. Charles Wyndham for his original character.

In March I resigned the Treasurership of the General Theatrical Fund on the ground mainly of the general apathy shown by "the profession" with regard to Dramatic Charities. Since then the Actors' Benevolent Fund, thanks to Mr. Irving, has set a better example.

At Easter the Hanlon-Lees opened at the Gaiety in the *Voyage en Suisse*, and the whole Gaiety company were moved to the Olympic to play in drama and burlesque. Their opening bill was *Little Em'ly*, in which Terry played "Micawber" and Royce "Uriah Heep," followed by the *Little Dr. Faust* burlesque.

Having settled the Easter programme at both theatres, I went off to see the dress rehearsal of a more serious drama, the *Passion Play* at Oberammergau. My restless activity provoked remarks like the following in the *Referee*, March 23rd, 1880:—

Hollingshead has had a good many irons in the fire lately, and has not been afraid of burning his fingers, for Sally B. and the Palais Royal people are presently coming, and for their season nearly £15,000 has already been subscribed. John, you must please to remember, proclaims himself a business manager and nothing more. He leaves to others the prating about art. His latest manifesto puts the matter very bluntly. It has been assumed in many quarters, he remarks, that a theatrical manager—the most heavily taxed, rated, and rented tradesman in the world—is bound to carry on his business on sentimental principles, thinking more of some mysterious duty he is supposed to owe to the public, and of another mysterious duty he is supposed to owe to art, than of a certain less mysterious duty which he undoubtedly owes to his creditors, and his breeches pocket. "Of course," says John, "no manager takes any heed of these discussions, but carries on his business on the divine and everlasting principle of self interest—a principle which probably governs the universe." There is no humbug about this.

I went to Munich on my way to Oberammergau, and as I entered the Art City, about nine o'clock at night, I noticed the lights burning in the Hof Theater. I enquired at the hotel if there was a performance, and was told, not for the public. The

king, in all probability, had ordered an opera for supper. His palace communicated with the theatre, and if he felt restless he would have the singers and orchestra collected, and an opera given without any other notice, even if it began at midnight. He would go out of his bedroom into his private box, and no one knew wh theatre or not. This was the cust of Bavaria, and yet there were p call him mad!

The next o Oberammergau—a journey of ab of it by road and the rest by rail. in the hills had only one inn of ve description, with sanitary arr iddle ages, and food, the staple sausage. There was plenty of beer; , fortunately, was as good as the best in I was there for the dress rehearsal, having had a private wire, I escaped the mob of tourists, who had not yet arrived.

Though it was May the weather was bitterly cold; snow was lying unthawed on the hills; the wind was bleak, and the sleet fell at intervals. The rehearsal, owing to the weather, did not begin, as arranged, the day after my arrival, so I passed the time with a friend playing at "shove halfpenny" in the tavern, an illegal pothouse game in England. We pretented to play for fabulous amounts, to astonish the simple-minded onlookers, who were not quite so simple when they were letting lodgings, or selling their wood-carvings in the village. Many of them were actors of important characters in the Passion Play. Joseph Meyer, the Christus, did not use the tavern—he was too busy in being interviewed by his admirers, especially the English. These admirers had a tendency to "flop" over him, and "interview" him as to his feelings while playing his part. What was originally a solemn service had already become

vulgarised, and was on the rapid downward path to the showman's level.

The theatre was on the skirts of the village. The roads to it were muddy, clayey, and sticky. The performance was announced at six o'clock in the morning by the public crier with a bell. Two-thirds of the theatre being open to the sky, and the other third only covered with a high shelving hooded roof, the wise playgoer took with him a truss of straw, carried in advance by a boy, to be used as a foot and leg warmer. I was one of the wise, and rejoiced in my wisdom. The performance began at eight, and by twelve, so cold was the weather, and so troublesome the slow falling snow, that the blue-nosed actors and actresses, and the half-frozen children, were released for the day. We went back to more beer, more liver sausage, and more shove halfpenny. The next morning at six the crier announced that the performance would be continued. I took my seat again with more straw, and at twelve o'clock an hour's interval was announced for dinner. There were one or two refreshment sheds attached to the wooden theatre, where unlimited beer and unlimited sausage were for sale at moderate prices. The performance began again at one, and continued till it was finished at six.

The representation covered nearly all the chief incidents in the Old Testament, represented as tableaux, or what we now call "living pictures"; and the life and death of Christ, represented as a drama, with choral accessories. The stage management, costumes, and properties of the Passion Play were perfect. Much of this was doubtless due to tradition, but more to the teaching of Munich—that great and almost obtrusive art centre being within two hours of Oberammergau. The acting was discreet and inoffensive, except in the case of Judas, and the sacred

story, as seen in action, taught the unprejudiced spectator two things; first, that Pontius Pilate was the only real gentleman in the drama, and secondly, that the overturning of the money changers' tables in the Temple, led obviously and directly up to the Crucifixion.

Being on the spot I sent a telegraphic summary to the *Daily News*, and in a few days, when I returned, I wrote a long account of the performance in the same journal. This put the paper in advance of its brother journals, and no special correspondents were sent to Oberammergau in 1880.

CHAPTER XXVI.

The evolution of pantomime—More ructions at the *Comédie Française* —Sarah Bernhardt in London—Another dinner—Another speech —French plays—M. F. Sarcey.

THE Hanlon-Lees at the Gaiety revived the taste for pure pantomime mixed with ingenious mechanical tricks that would have opened poor old Grimaldi's eyes with envy and astonishment. Omnibuses that turn over on the stage, spilling their passengers in every direction; Pullman cars that blow up with a comic explosion; and ceilings that allow footmen to fall through them on to a dinner table were not invented at the opening of the century. The Hanlon-Lees were inventors as well as actors, acrobats, and pantomimists, and their work, presented at the Gaiety, took at least two years in preparation.

The Olympic went on, producing one burlesque after another, Byron with *Trovatore* succeeding Burnand. The Gaiety at the end of May began its French plays with Sarah Bernhardt, who had broken loose from the Comédie Française, as the star, supported by a most competent company selected principally from the Paris Vaudeville Theatre. I paid Sarah Bernhardt £80 a performance, and this, with the Saturday's matinée, made £560 a week, a sum that showed her market value outside the house of Moliere. Coquelin (another rebel) was to have joined her during the season, and was under contract to do so, but the administration of the Théâtre Français frightened him for a time, and he broke his engagement. The Nemesis of 1879 was beginning to assert itself, and the French Theatre was being

punished for having divided its worship of Art with the worship of Mammon.

The *Times* (May 29, 1880) comments upon this dispute:—

Insubordination is proverbially contagious. M. Coquelin, the elder, has now tendered his resignation to the Comédie Française, the managing committee having declined to allow him just now a fortnight's holiday to fulfil an engagement in London. This decision was confirmed by two arbitrators to whom the matter was referred. His right to a holiday is not disputed, but the objection was to the time of taking it. It is still hoped that a definite rupture will be avoided, but the Comédie Française has evidently entered on troubled times, when tempting foreign offers and individual self-assertion imperil the harmonious co-operation hitherto secured.

When it was found that M. Coquelin could not come without a rupture with M. Perrin and his co-partners, which he was afraid to face, Madame Bernhardt generously exerted herself to fill the breach, and worked doubly hard for another fortnight. In all my transactions with this great actress, I found her loyal, reasonable, and hard-working. No labour frightened her, and it is a satisfaction for her to know that she was always a financial success, and fully earned her liberal honorarium. We returned any subscriptions paid for the Bernhardt-Coquelin combination (very few were applied for), and I had to write to the Press saying that:—"During a management of twelve years, with singularly varied engagements, this is the first time I have had to apologise for unredeemed promises." At a dinner given by the "United Arts Club," early in June, I was asked, quite unexpectedly, to "say a few words." I quote from the *Era*, June 30, 1880.

The toast of "The Drama" was proposed by Mr. Francis Cobbe, who omitted to couple any name with it, and Mr. John Hollingshead, who occupied the vice-chair, was somewhat suddenly called upon by Mr. Irving to respond.

Mr. Hollingshead rose and said: Mr. Irving and gentlemen, in the presence of so many distinguished members of the Dramatic Profession—actors who are not only prominent as actors, but popular as

managers—I am a little surprised that I am called upon to return thanks for this toast, though, at the same time, I must confess that I feel gratified at the compliment. Addressing you, as I do, from what I may call the French side of the channel [Mr. Hollingshead was placed at a long table opposite Mr. Irving, surrounded by strangers to him, with the exception of Mr. Marius, Mr. Mayer, &c.], and separated, as I am, from nearly all my old theatrical friends by an impassable gulf, it is pleasant to feel that I am not altogether regarded as an alien by those friends, and am thought of in connection with one of the leading toasts of the evening. I appear before you, gentlemen, as you doubtless know, in a suit of sackcloth and ashes. I have hardly yet recovered from the unpleasing duty that was forced upon me of apologising to the English public for the non-redemption of certain theatrical promises. Those who know me intimately—and I am pleased to say that there are many gentlemen present in that enviable position—also know how exceedingly repugnant it always is to my feelings to have to write letters to the newspapers. They know how unwilling at all times I am to obtain what I may call unpaid publicity—I will not say advertisement—for any enterprise in which at the moment I may happen to be interested. When I received M. Coquelin's letter—or rather when Mr. Mayer received it—announcing rather lightly and unexpectedly that he was unable to keep his engagement, as if it had been an invitation to a supper party, I felt very much like that celebrated highwayman who has been immortalised in the pages of Lord Byron. Many of you, doubtless, know the passage I mean in "Don Juan," but, if our worthy chaplain (The Rev. Mr. White, of the Savoy) will allow me, I will quote the lines for the benefit of those who may not be familiar with them. The highwayman in question had "got his gruel" on Shooter's Hill, and before resigning himself to fate, according to the poem, turning

> To his faithful follower and henchman,
> Said "Jack, I'm floored by that 'ere b——y Frenchman."

I deal pretty freely in *plain English* myself, gentlemen; but I am not responsible for the strong language used by Lord Byron on this occasion, and in case any one may think his lordship needs a defence, I may cite another eminent writer of the period, who used the same powerful adjective. If you look into the *Noctes*—those written by Professor Wilson—you will find that he begins one of his dialogues—putting the words, I think, into the mouth of a working man:—"No, Sir! Shakespeare was *not* a b——y fool." The professor indulged in none of that mock-modesty of type which we are compelled to indulge in in the present day, and I give you the passage, with our worthy Chaplain's permission, for what it is worth, as a strongly marked opinion on the British Drama. With regard to French Drama—the French plays which I have before spoken of—those who deal in them to use a vulgar but very expressive phrase, will find that it is not "all beer and skittles." Our greatest trouble in connection with French plays is that curious officer of State who is known as the Licenser of

Plays, and our difficulties are not decreased when we undertake to bring over a company like that of the Palais Royal. You will be glad, however, gentlemen, to know that we have suggested a way out of these difficulties by offering to strike out the whole of that company's *répertoire*. We have done more than this; we have suggested that MM. Geoffroy, Hyacinthe, L'Heritier, Daubray, Milher, and others, should devote their talents, during their short stay amongst us, to representations of *Sandford and Merton*, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, and other presumably harmless literary productions. Gentlemen, in conclusion, in the names of Mr. Irving, Mr. Hare, Mr. Kendal, Mr. Toole, and Mr. Neville (I do not see Mr. Bancroft), I have to thank you sincerely for the manner in which you have proposed and received this very important toast—the toast of the Drama. (Mr. Hollingshead resumed his seat amidst loud applause.)

Sarah Bernhardt's season was followed by the company of the Palais Royal. About two years previous to this I had a contract with this company, or rather the manager of it, which he declined to complete. I brought an action for damages, and was amused at the celerity and economy of French law. I was defeated in my action and appealed. I was again defeated. About two months only were exhausted in these proceedings, and I had to pay the certified costs on both sides. I hope the legal authorities in England will take a note of this—they were under Thirty Pounds!

Before the Palais Royal season closed, it was strengthened by the ever-welcome addition of Madame Chaumont.

M. Sarcey, in an account of Sarah Bernhardt in London, which he published, was in ecstasies over the politeness of the members of the Comédie Française. The actress, it would appear, had left her dress of Posthumia at the French theatre, and wishing to appear in it at the Gaiety, sent to fetch it. The Committee of the Comédie Française actually gave it up. Yet, observes the French writer, with pardonable pride at the chivalry displayed by the Committee, it would have been easy to cause her inconvenience by a refusal.

The same eminent man thus described an interview of Sarah with the Prince of Wales:—"The Prince came the other night to pay his compliments to Mdlle. Bernhardt. He was accompanied by the King of Greece, whom he presented to the actress. 'My brother-in-law,' he said. Mdlle. Bernhardt bowed, and remained *tête-à-tête* with the King. She called him 'Monsieur' all the time, and talked right and left in her usual cavalier style. But time pressed, and she had to return to her dressing-room. 'Well,' said her colleagues, 'what do you think of the King of Greece?" 'What king?' she asked. 'The king to whom you have just been talking,' they answered. On this she ran off to the Prince of Wales. 'Ah, Prince,' she exclaimed, 'it was treachery not to tell me that it was the King of Greece.' 'But I told you it was my brother-in-law, said the Prince,' 'Your brother-in-law,' replied Mdlle. Bernhardt, 'but how was I to know? He might have been a tallow merchant.'" "The English," added M. Sarcey, plaintively, "are not shocked at this; they forgive everything in this spoiled child."

M. Sarcey also gave a very amusing and flattering account of the English "Censor of Plays," Mr. Pigott. He had expected, he says, to meet a stiff, grave, formal, puritanical old gentleman, dry, rigorous, and austere. Instead of this he was agreeably surprised to encounter a rather jovial, easy mannered, charming man of the world, *un Parisien de Londres*, and *tout-à-fait séduisant*.

CHAPTER XXVII.

American farce—J. T. Raymond—*Colonel Sellers*—Mark Twain on the stage—*The Mighty Dollar*—Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Florence—Miss Gilchrist's first opportunity in comedy—The *Corsican Brothers* burlesque—The original Sir Peter Teazle's original crutch-stick—Ibsen's first introduction to England—More fire panic—The *Forty Thieves*—The first three-act burlesque—Off again.

FROM France to America was a wide jump, but I made it. I had an American season. I began it with a play of Mark Twain's, known in the United States as *The Gilded Age*. In England we called it *Colonel Sellers*, the name of the chief character, admirably represented by Mr. J. T. Raymond, since dead. The character was of the Micawber type. This was followed by Mr. and Mrs. Florence, in a play of more dramatic pretension, called *The Mighty Dollar*. Mr. and Mrs. Florence were old favourites in England, and "Billy" Florence's picture of the "Hon. Bardwell Slote," a jobbing congress-man in America, though an unfamiliar portrait in London, was recognised as a life-like and humorous impersonation. Mrs. Florence was always a clever comedy actress; and in this piece, Miss Constance Gilchrist (now the Countess of Orkney) was promoted to the position of a leading juvenile actress, and fully justified her promotion. To employ the members of my stock company, I took the "Imperial Theatre," as it was called, at the Royal Aquarium, and gave regular afternoon performances. Mr. Florence, off the stage, was one of the most justly popular men of his day. He was pleasant, genial, and an excellent friend. He was an honoured member of the best clubs in London and New York, and his sudden and unexpected death, about 1890, was regretted by a

large and distinguished circle, and by no one more than myself, except, perhaps, the Duke of Beaufort.

During this American season, I was very glad to lend the theatre and my aid in organising a benefit for the veteran playwright Mr. Maddison Morton, once a prolific writer of English farce, if often with a French foundation. The programme was provided by distinguished amateurs, including Mr. W. S. Gilbert, Mr. Toole, Mr. Arthur Cecil, Mr. George Grossmith, Mr. Corney Grain, "Dr." Arthur Sullivan, and the ever active and undefeated, Mrs. Keeley.

The Mighty Dollar was backed up by a short and clever burlesque of the *Corsican Brothers* (then playing at the Lyceum) by F. C. Burnand and Pottinger Stephens,—what the French would call a *Pièce de Circonstance.* The chief feature was Mr. Royce's parody of Mr. Irving. I apologised to my old friend, brother manager, and opposite neighbour, and presented him with the original crutch-stick, with a suitable inscription, which once belonged to Mr. King, the comedian, and was used by him when *The School for Scandal* was first produced and he appeared as Sir Peter Teazle. A fine opportunity, for which there was a precedent, was offered to Mr. Henry Irving, but he did not avail himself of it. When Buckstone's burlesque of Albert Smith's *Mont Blanc* was being played at the Haymarket, a prominent actor of the company, Mr. Braid, was "made up" to represent the popular author and entertainer. One Saturday night Albert Smith put himself in Braid's dress, and every one at once noticed a visible falling off in the actor's imitation of the lecturer!

The first appearance of Ibsen on the English stage—an author who has given rise to so much latter-day controversy—was at a Gaiety *matinée*, December 15, 1880. The play was *Quicksands: or, the Pillars of Society*, translated and adapted by Mr. William Archer.

At Christmas, I reproduced the *Voyage en Suisse* with the Hanlon-Lees at the Imperial Theatre, and started my first three-act burlesque, the *Forty Thieves*, by Robert Reece, at the Gaiety. This extension of burlesque (much abused) enabled me to give and work out a coherent story. The plan was enormously successful fc ınd justified its trial. The Gaiety simultaneously, with legitimate p ctical management of Miss Litton.

At the clc *ıatinées* at the Gaiety, which cover ld standard comedies, a children's ed and organised by Mr. Charle: d a number of French comic oper... were varied by a trial performance ed by Messrs. Savile Clark and D. reaux on Moy Thomas's novel, "A Fight for Life," and the amateur performance of a burlesque called *Herne the Hunted*, written by William Yardley and Robert Reece. The cast comprised Messrs. Ashby Sterry, Allen, Maclean, Archie Wortley, C. W Trollope, Knox Holmes, A. Bastard, Frank Miles, Captain Barrington Foote, Leslie Ward, H. St. Paul, J. Hardinge Giffard, Captain Gooch, W. Yardley, Miss Fortescue, Mrs. Cecil Clay, and Mrs. Livingstone Thompson. The proceeds—a considerable sum—were devoted to the Artists' Benevolent Fund.

The "Fires in Theatres" question again became prominent, and much official and semi-official correspondence ensued. I adopted my usual plan of appealing direct to the public in the form of paragraphs and advertisements. The following are average specimens of my managerial policy and impudence:—

ANTI-PANIC NOTICE.

The Gaiety Theatre is more or less fireproof and detached, and opens into four streets. Apart from the stage exits, two in number, through one of which a stage coach might be driven, the front of the house has

eight exits. The stall exits are along fireproof passages into the Strand and Exeter-street. The balcony and upper boxes have equal exits. The pit opens direct into Catherine-street, nearly on a level with the pavement. The gallery exit is down a stone staircase, 8ft. wide, into Catherine-street; and every staircase is stone, in brick walls, and all passages and floors are iron and concrete. There are no oil lamps in the passages to add to the danger of fire, but the gas is supplied and checked by eight separate and distinct meters. The two magnificent extra exits communicating with staircases in another building, which were closed some years ago by one of our infamous molly-coddling Licensing Acts of Parliament, still remain closed. The grand staircase is more than forty yards from the stage.

During the last fifty-three years in England, Ireland, and Scotland, fourteen London theatres and nine provincial theatres have been destroyed, but not one member of the public has been burned. The only deaths from fire in these cases have been two—a manager and a dresser.

NOTICE.—One hundred and sixty millions of London playgoers have passed harmlessly through the London theatres during the last 50 years, without a single death from fire, although 13 metropolitan theatres have been burnt down in that period. The Brooklyn bogie, although it may lead to panic legislation, has not affected the minds of London actuaries. Not a single fire premium on a theatre has been increased to the extent of twopence. Some such statement as this is necessary, as, consequent upon the publication of evidence now being given before a Parliamentary Committee, the alarmist heading "Fires in Theatres" has become part of the stereotyped stock of our leading journals.

JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

The *Forty Thieves*, which was not given a long run by some of the papers, continued its prosperous course until the French plays became due, and as I always adhered strictly to my contracts, written or not written, I took it off for a time, in the height of its success. The Gaiety company went on tour, appearing a second time, by Royal command, at Yarmouth. The French plays this season comprised the Gymnase company, with Madame Sarah Bernhardt, and the Renaissance company, with Madame Jeanne Granier. At the close of the French plays, the "Hanlon-Lees" returned for a week until the Gaiety company had finished their travelling and came back to their own proper temple. When they ceased their travelling I began mine, and, without much preparation, rushed off to Russia.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A rush to Russia—St. Petersburg—Moscow—Nishni-Novgorod—The Volga—Samara—Orenburg—The Steppes—Prince Dolgourouki's horse farm—A costly telegram—M. Coquelin.

I STARTED from Victoria, and never stopped till I got to St. Petersburg. I had a Russian bath (and wanted one), and dined with our able consul, Mr. Michell. I soon took a bird's-eye view of St. Petersburg, and I was saved much time and trouble by my two companions, the Hon. Colonel F. Wellesley (who was aide-de-camp to the Duke of Edinburgh before and at his marriage), and Dr. Carrick, physician to the English Embassy. We pushed on to Moscow—next to Venice and Seville the most remarkable city I had seen, or was to see. St. Petersburg, with its mixture of Antwerp, Wapping, Deptford and Liverpool, had disappointed me; but Moscow made amends. I saw it from the streets, I saw it in the bazaars, I saw it in its Petticoat Lane Jews' quarter; but, above all, I saw it from the upper galleries of the Kremlin, with its bright green scaly roofs glittering in the sun, like the backs of so many fiery dragons. I went to the top of the Sparrow Hills, and stood where Napoleon had stood when he gazed into the valley, and saw the shining city of domes in the near distance. Perhaps I thought of the Moscow Decree, and the regulations for the government of the Théatre Français, which, without design or malice, I had helped to break?

Without much delay we pushed on to the great Trade Fair of Nishni-Novgorod. Rapidity in travel-

ling is not to be obtained in Russia. The railroads are so badly laid, and the bridges so insecurely constructed, that twenty miles an hour is express speed. What you lose in scurry, however, you gain in comfort. Every ten miles or so you come upon a steak and potato station, with plenty of time to eat; and at a proper *table-d'hôte* hour you arrive at a station where an elaborate French dinner is ready, and you are deliberately and politely served by waiters in full dress, with clean white gloves on their hands. There is no clanging bell, and no howling porters. Everything is calm and stately. Time is no object. The watchword is repose. And yet much of the country outside is a howling wilderness, and the blind, lame, and horribly deformed beggars that crawl or are carried to you at the station, are more sad to look on in their servile abasement, than they are in their physical distortion and suffering.

Nishni-Novgorod, though it is not quite what it was in Richard Cobden's time, is the greatest commercial fair in the world. Nothing can equal it. It is the father and the mother—the wet and dry nurse—of International Exhibitions. The Americans may equal it some day—when they have forgotten Chicago.

At the wharf on the Volga river, where we took our petroleum boat for Samara, did I see—or was it a dream?—many boats loaded with poor manacled wretches in iron cages, like wild beasts, on their road to Siberia? Why not death, instead of torture?

The Volga, judged by European and American standards, is not a picturesque river. The beach at Samara began to show that we were on the borders of Oriental non-sanitation. Orenburg, the Asiatic frontier town, with its minarets, and sanded roads, was a sign that we had left the sanctity of human life behind us. A telegram was lying for me at the

station. I answered it. That answer cost me seven thousand pounds.

A young prince Dolgourouki was waiting for us with a *troika*—a carriage with three horses abreast, driven by a Kirghese Tartar with a peacock's feather in his hat. He had not drawn up to the station in good style, and the [illegible]nce looked murder, and talked annihilati[illegible] Kirghese cowered before the storm. A[illegible]my dear, hospitable and polished friends, as [illegible]one day show you.

We were received and [illegible]ied at the Emperor's horse-farm in the Steppe[illegible] thirty miles outside Orenburg, on the ro[illegible]va. Our host was Prince Dolgourouki. [illegible]as full of the scent of wild thyme. Camels slowly [illegible]assed us loaded with the rich carpets of Turkestan; [illegible]ungry eagles swirled over our heads; howling wolves came to our doors at night. But we had a French cook upon the premises, and whatever domestic shortcomings were apparent, and doubtless inevitable, our dinner was always served *à la Russe*, and we ate it in dress clothes. The family man-servant who waited at table laughed loudly at all our jokes, for in Russia familiarity and repression go hand-in-hand.

Outside the hut was the broad prairie land, capable, if cultivated, of feeding the whole of Europe. In one direction—many hundreds of miles off—lay Khiva, and in another direction—even further—the Great Wall of China. We visited a Kirghese chief, who not only bred horses but ate them. He had a drove of about a thousand wild untamed steeds hunted down from the hills, and when I had chosen one, it was lassoed, with a man on his back in a few minutes, and the pair galloped off out of sight for a forty miles' scamper. The feast of horseflesh afterwards, when the chief, as a mark of respect, attempted to put pieces of yellow fat in my mouth with his

fingers, was a proper penalty to pay for what I had seen. After this I rode on a camel to please and oblige his retainers, and felt as if I were travelling astride a moving haystack.

I returned to England, and was nearly seven days and nights in the train, with little stoppages at Moscow, St. Petersburg, Berlin, and Brussels.

The *Forty Thieves* was still running, and my telegram had pledged me to produce *Princess Toto*, a musical piece by W. S. Gilbert and the late F. Clay, at the Opera Comique. I produced it, and it cost me about £7000.

While I was away, according to several journals, M. Coquelin amused himself and his audience by caricaturing me on the stage at Deauville in a small piece called *Mon Bénéfice*. Caricature shows a public man that he is a person of some importance. I had not been back very long before I was able to announce a long renewal of my lease, and the following appeared in the *Daily News*, Sept. 8, 1881 :—

Mr. Hollingshead's lease of the Gaiety Theatre has been renewed by the executors of the late Mr. Lionel Lawson for the unusually long term of twenty-one years. The rent is, we believe, £4000 per annum, but in comparing this with the rent of other houses, it is to be borne in mind that the refreshment bars, which are estimated to be worth about £1000 a year, and are usually accounted to managers as a source of profit, are not in this case included. Mr. Hollingshead has been sole manager and lessee of the Gaiety since its first opening in 1868. There are certainly few houses which have not during that period witnessed many changes of management. Theatrical speculations are notoriously precarious unless they are under the direct control of competent managers, and perhaps no better evidence could be given of the prosperity of the Gaiety than is afforded by the permanency of Mr. Hollingshead's managerial reign.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Plays by distinguished men—Bernal Osborne—Disraeli—The first Lord Lytton—Lord Beaconsfield's generosity and Lord Rowton's promptitude—The late Lord Lytton—The first panic and Captain Shaw—Off again.

DURING my management, up to this point, I had had several offers of plays from distinguished men and authors. The late Mr. Bernal Osborne promised me a comedy that he was writing, or thought of writing, and I had hopes, at one time, of getting a play by Mr. Disraeli. I was more than once under obligations to Lord Beaconsfield (or Mr. Disraeli, as I prefer to call him), and I am sure Lord Rowton will not question my taste or good faith if I publish the following letter, which reflects nothing but honour upon him and his illustrious chief. The letter was the outcome of a conversation I had with him one summer's evening at Cremorne Gardens :—

[COPY.]

To JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD, Esq.,
GAIETY THEATRE, LONDON.

[PRIVATE.] 2, WHITEHALL GARDENS,
March 1, 1877.

DEAR HOLLINGSHEAD,

After considering the host of varied claims which press upon that most inadequate sum—the Pension Fund—Lord Beaconsfield is sorry not to find himself able to add the name of Mrs. Walter Thornbury to the list of recipients, but, if it be agreeable to Mrs. Thornbury, it will afford him pleasure to award to her a grant of Three Hundred Pounds (£300) from the Fund technically styled the "Special Service Fund," which is set apart by the Queen out of the Civil List. Can you tell me Mrs. Thornbury's present address, in order that an official communication may be sent to her?

This is a private letter, but you are at liberty to tell Mrs. Thornbury or any of her friends what it contains.

(Signed) Very truly yours, MONTAGU CORRY.

The late Lord Lytton (our ambassador in Paris), with whom I was on terms of intimacy, spoke to me about a bundle of posthumous plays by his late father, some time before Mr. John Hare produced one at the Court Theatre, and Mr. Wilson Barrett another at the Princess's. I selected one, which I thought the "pick of the basket," and Mr. Charles Kent read it to John McCullough, a sound and dignified Americn actor. His mental illness alone prevented him taking up the play, appearing in it first at Drury Lane, and afterwards in America. I had no idea of producing it at the Gaiety, and had arranged with Mr. Irving for a temporary tenancy of the Lyceum.

The work in question was left by the author complete for representation, one of his latest labours being that of giving the finishing touches to its most dramatic scenes. The story, like the plot of Ben Jonson's old comedy, *The Case is Altered*, is founded on Plautus's play of *The Captives*. Its scene is laid in Ætolia, in the days of Ancient Greece, and as in the work of the Latin poet, the action arises out of the efforts of a father to regain possession of his sons, taken prisoners in childhood by the Elians. The consignment of the younger son, Tyndarus, to servile labour in the stone quarries by his own father, in the belief that a trick has been put upon him, and in ignorance of the young man's true parentage, is also strictly followed; but a love story is interwoven in the English play in accordance with the requirements of the modern romantic stage, and the whole is endowed with an ingenuity of intrigue which marks even a still further divergence from the spirit of the ancient classical drama. Some reflection, perhaps, of the loves of Ferdinand and Miranda will be traced in the relations between Tyndarus and the Greek girl for whose sake he is a "patient bondman."

While I had this play under consideration, the late

Lord Lytton (the second) was in India as Governor-General, and in spite of his engrossing State labours, he found time to write me, in his own handwriting—a clear, business-like hand that would have qualified him for any counting-house—the most minute details as to his notions of cast, costume, theatre, and scenery. I fancy he [illegible]ar. that play, more than any other. [illegible]rea (and very well, too) to Charles Warner, [illegible]uest, at Knebworth. He was so earnest and anxious for its success, that he ca[illegible] room while I was dressing for dinne[illegible]estions and hear my views. He wa[illegible], a remarkable man. He was fam[illegible]ıture under the sun; his speeches were [illegible] his father's; and he was singularly fre[illegible]lf-importance. The production of the piece-[illegible]e production of all pieces—involved a risk, but I regret that I never incurred that risk. I fooled away much money on many worse things than drama which had an undoubted claim to be ranked as literature.

We wound up 1881 by producing a three-act burlesque of Burnand's in the autumn, on the story of *Whittington*, and another three-act burlesque by Reece at Christmas, on the story of *Aladdin*.

Both the Lord Chamberlain and the Metropolitan Board of Works were stirred into unwonted activity by events and newspaper clamour, and Captain Shaw—a highly competent officer—was instructed to report on the condition of certain theatres. It was not his fault if his instructions, dictated by panic, were limited to a few places hardly requiring inspection. The following letters, one to the *Daily News*, and the other to the Lord Chamberlain, explained my views at that time:—

Will you allow me to say that I have decided to publish Captain Shaw's report on the Gaiety Theatre, price twopence? The Metro-

politan Board of Works, having between four and five hundred London places of amusement to deal with, have instructed their officer to report upon eight theatres, some of them the best in London. These eight reports have been discussed in the parish Parliament, the House of Commons, and the House of Lords, as if they exhausted the whole subject and contained statements too alarming to be published. I am no believer in secrecy, and, although most of Captain Shaw's principal suggestions, if accepted, can only be carried out by the owners of the theatres and the repeal of at least three Acts of Parliament, I will let the public see what these suggestions are, at a price within the reach of the humblest capacity.

JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

TO THE RIGHT HON. THE LORD CHAMBERLAIN.

Dec. 14, 1881.

MY LORD,

I am in receipt of your Lordship's circular of the 12th inst. As far as the Gaiety Theatre is concerned, I can do no more than I have done for the *probable* safety of the public. The Legislature can help me by removing the absurd and injurious restrictions which forbid the theatre communicating with the adjoining restaurant (35 & 36 Vict. c. 94, sec. 9).

In case of panic, when the time comes, it remains to be seen whether an English public will behave better than the Nice public, who stabbed each other in the back, or the Vienna public, who throttled each other from behind.

I remain, My Lord,

Your Lordship's Most Obedient Servant,

JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

CHAPTER XXX.

A peep at Spain [illegible] ghts—Frascuelo—Manzanilla wine — Th [illegible] y" reminder—An answer— *Punch*—R [illegible] Saturday Review.*

HAVING re [illegible] n to be present at Madame Be [illegible] ith *M. Damala*, which took place a [illegible] useyite church of St. Andrew's, in [illegible] rd Street, I went to Paris to join a little [illegible] were going to Spain. This party consist [illegible] . Staat Forbes, the distinguished railway chai [illegible] Mr. (now Sir Henry) Calcraft, the late Major DICK [illegible] n, member for Dover and chairman of the Crystal Palace Company, and Captain Godbold. Captain Godbold organised the journey, engaged the courier, and relieved us of all the petty annoyances of travelling. My friends had a little business in Madrid with the Spanish President of the Board of Trade, and they discovered him in a back street, living in a first floor, over a pickle-shop. I found in Madrid a city that had tried, to the best of its small ability, to copy Paris. In all respects, except one, it fell short of its model. This exception was the *Prado*, or afternoon promenade, and the show of horses, carriages, drivers, riders, liveries, &c., excelled the afternoon show in the *Bois de Boulogne* in the palmiest days of the Empire. On Easter Sunday we took a box for the opening bull-fight of the season, and found that for the upper classes bull-fighting was an expensive luxury. We paid fourteen pounds sterling. The bull-ring seated nearly 20,000 people, and it was crammed with a decorous, but excited multitude. An exhibition of a similar

kind in England would have been flooded with the scum of the sporting world, and given up to drinking, smoking, swearing, and unchecked rowdyism. From an Englishman's point of view it was brutal, but stately. It was carried on in the brilliant dresses, and according to the strict rules that had been sanctified by ages. The principal performers staked their lives against the lives of the bulls, which is more than can be said of the English Prize-ring, especially at the present moment. Being a stern humanitarian, and opposed theoretically to the killing of any animal, either for sport or food, I should vote for the abolition of bull-fights, and so would many high-class Spaniards. I am one of those half-educated creatures who never "mix my pleasures or my pains with sorrow to the meanest thing that breathes." My gospel is the gospel of the "Ancient Mariner." "He liveth best who loveth best all things both great and small." I am quite aware that this quotation can be applied to a gluttonous alderman at a city dinner.

We went on to Seville, a city that struck me with more delight and amazement than even Moscow, that I had seen the year before, or Venice that I had seen ten years previously. It was a revelation to the Cockney mind. No one seemed to play guitars or castagnettes, or to dance fandangoes, but the life was new, strange and fascinating. The city was a half-way house, and something more, between the past and present. At times it looked more Moorish than Spanish, but the life was more Spanish than Moorish. It was something to see the house-tops drooping with rich flowers, and to know that there was not a chimney-pot in the whole city. In the *prado* expert horsemen on splendid animals were riding Mexican fashion, standing up in the saddle. It was a city of marble.

Sauntering through the narrow lanes, where people could shake hands with each other from the opposite windows, under the shelter of a bright-striped sun awning stretched from one roof to another, it was soon apparent what a hold the bull-ring had upon the bulk of the population. The leading bull-fighter of Spain, the elegant and daring Frascuelo, was in a shop making a small purchase, and the shopkeeper would not serve him before he had knelt down and kissed the celebrated toreador's hand. We had seen Frascuelo in the ring at Madrid, and we were to see him again in Seville. We afterwards were introduced to him at a café, and cemented our acquaintance with Manzanilla, the Spanish wine of honour. We came away with a deep impression that Frascuelo was a born courtier and a thorough gentleman.

When I returned, as an old cricketer I was asked to help in the organisation of a Theatrical Cricket Club, and I consented. I print the prospectus :—

My troubles as a manager, like managerial troubles at the present time, were largely due to outside and irresponsible critics. The title of the Gaiety had its advantages and disadvantages. It commended itself to people seeking a light entertainment after dinner, though they often found a heavy one. It drew the attention of the Amateur Scavengers and Anointed Mudlarks of the Impuritan Party, and led to letters like the following:—

SIR,—As one who is interested in the question of high-class dramatic art both on the stage and as regards the comfort and convenience of the audience, I hope you will permit me to call your attention to the following facts:—You are doubtless aware that many families of position are prevented from frequenting theatres on the grounds that persons of doubtful moral character can obtain admission. It has always been my opinion that the presence of ladies of position is the surest means of maintaining the tone of places of amusement, and I am informed that managers of high-class theatres endeavour as far as possible to regulate admission to their houses so as to secure this tone. During the last month I have twice taken stalls at the Gaiety Theatre with a party of four or five friends; on each occasion I have been seated by the side of women who should not have been there. I feel myself obliged to protest against the admission to the best seats of the house of persons whose object is not amusement, but business, and whose manners and appearance are an annoyance to the respectable portion of the community. I have no doubt that mistakes cannot always be avoided by managers, but that such persons should be habitually admitted to your theatre would be quite enough to oblige me to keep away. I have no doubt that I represent the feelings of many ladies who hesitate to apply to you, and who feel as I do, that the amusement and pleasure of the evening are rendered distasteful by such scenes as I witnessed last night, however covertly they may be conducted.

With every apology for calling your attention to these unpleasant details, I enclose my card, and remain, yours faithfully, M.

MR. J. HOLLINGSHEAD.
March 15, 1882.

To this communication I replied:—

GAIETY THEATRE, STRAND.
March 17, 1882.

MADAME,—I am much obliged to you for your long letter. Theatrical managers have no power to sift and screen their audiences. If any breach of decorum is brought before them they can and would stop it, but beyond this they are powerless, unless they want to live in law and

police courts. In all State theatres abroad no such power exists of improving audiences by force, and raising the drama at the point of the truncheon. In England we have no State theatres; all the State does is to suck as much taxes and rates from us as it can possibly get. From this theatre alone it draws about £1,000 a year.—Yours very truly,

JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

I was not [illegible] th the Pandemonium Paving Com[illegible] and when I was I answered the[illegible]

I frequently [illegible]y authors, as I have said before, [illegible]n some who hardly wanted defer[illegible]g explains itself:—

GAIETY.—N[illegible]curred the grave displeasure of the *Saturday* [illegible] called Rabelais a "dirty old blackguard." [illegible] Gaiety, which probably has quite as much I[illegible]ment as the *Saturday Review* can boast. In [illegible] *Saturday Review* uses words which with the slightest alteration [illegible] be applied to this theatre with as much propriety as to the author: "In the fountain of its wisdom and wit we each find that we have the power of finding; there is poetry for one, philosophy for another, humour for a third, learning, prophecy, style for others. And some there are who can draw nothing but mud and dirt and wine on the lees from the fountain, and, therefore, think themselves superior persons, and pity the rest of the world as mashers."

CHAPTER XXXI.

The Reform Club—The Gaiety and the Nonconformist conscience—A Rabelaisian preface—The danger of being ironical in a stupid world—The difference between pink tights, wholesale and retail—The Beefsteak Club — Marlborough House — An offer to Mrs. Langtry.

IT was some such feeling as was shown by my lady correspondent, a mistaken notion of the Gaiety Theatre, of what it had done or might do, and a general prejudice against amusements of all kinds, which caused me, about this period, to be black-balled at the Reform Club. In a small social club I hold that the committee or the members have a right to black-ball a candidate, and that canditate, if he is a gentleman, not wishing to force his company on a gathering of clubmen, who decide that they do not want him, ought to accept the decision without a murmur. In a big political club, where a candidate has been known to have worked for years for the spread of the "principles" (if any) and probably for the good of the party, the case is different. I was asked to become a member by a number of influential friends in the club, connected, more or less, with Liberal journalism. My reply was that they knew my thirty years' work, and many men who had done less were accorded the honour of an election without ballot. This was not to be, and in a weak moment I allowed my name to be put upon the "screen." The "Nonconformist Conscience" was then not the open power that it is now, but it was a sturdy child, young, strong, and growing, and destined to become the greatest curse of the so-called Liberal Party. 'I was made to come before it as the lessee and manager of

the Gaiety Theatre, a house that in my Rabelaisian moments I called the "Theatre Royal Horse Collar." What work that theatre did I have shown in this book, at the risk of becoming tiresome, but this work was, of course, utterly unknown to the "Nonconformist Conscience." That "Conscience" is always more frightened by words than things, and my theatre was called the "Gaiety." A book of my reprints had just then been issued, called "Plain English," and this was its Rabelaisian preface :—

"When David Garrick had a dispute with the gentle and mysterious *Junius*, he was called a 'vagabond,' and told to 'stick to his pantomimes.' He stuck to his pantomimes and continued the dispute. The same remark might be hurled at me, with about the same result.

"I am now a licensed dealer in legs, short-skirts, French adaptations, 'Shakespeare, Taste, and the Musical Glasses.' I am no longer a professional writer toiling for my living, but an amateur writing when I think I have something to say. Perhaps I am mistaken, perhaps not. I regard the literary man, or the writing machine, as a barrel-organ, made with a certain number of tunes and no more. These tunes may be played over and over again, as long as the public will listen, but they can neither be added to nor diminished. The machine will revolve its given number of times, and nothing can stop it. What one editor rejects, another is bound to take ; what one publisher spurns, another is bound to print and circulate. Nature provides a remedy for this in fires, dry-rot, and other destructive agencies. The vanity of seeing one's name in print is not an unamiable weakness. The best books have some evil in them, and the worst some good. Let them go their ways in peace, and find their various levels.

"JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD."

If the Reform Club had not lost that sense of humour which the party once boasted of in the days of the Rev. Sydney Smith, it would have seen that the writer of the above preface was grinning through a horse-collar. The preface might have been attacked on the score of "taste," but no one knows better than the so-called Liberal party that taste is not one of the motive powers of the universe. Gin, beer, railways, soap, mustard, and pills are motive powers, inside the legislature and outside, but taste is a thing generally monopolised by the House of Lords

—an institution not much loved and respected by the "Nonconformist Conscience." The great prophet of this "conscience" did not show much taste when he broke into the High Temple of Everlasting Cackle, and said, "Take away that bauble!"

This Rabelaisian preface, and the accursed word "Gaiety," influenced the majority of the members. I know, pretty well, who voted for me and who against me, but as the principals are dead, and cannot answer, I will not publish their names. I cannot, however, in justice to myself, abstain from chronicling one inconsistency of the "Nonconformist conscience." My leading opponent was a prominent politician, of spotless integrity and character, of generous and thoughtful commercial instincts, of great but unobtrusive charity, an ornament to his party, but, on one point, narrow-minded to the verge of bigotry. No money could have tempted him to go inside the doors of the Gaiety, even to witness a play by John Milton (*Samson Agonistes*), but he forgot one great and curious fact. While he was keeping me out of a club, on Gaiety grounds, which I had almost earned a right to enter, his firm were supplying me wholesale with pink silk tights (their own manufacture, warranted) for my public exhibition, night and day, of those "legs" which I had mentioned in my Rabelaisian preface!

The Beefsteak Club, a much more exclusive club, were more liberal to me in electing me as one of their "original members." I rewarded them by writing this in their "album"—

FINE LANGUAGE!

The fuss about the Titles Bill
  Has shown the country clearly
That taxes pay for words, not deeds,
  And pay for them most dearly.
If "Empress" now, instead of "Queen,"
  Impresses more our sight, I
Shall run my pen through simple "God,"
  And always write, "Almighty!" J. H.

Though the Prince of Wales lived in the same street, and only a few doors from the Reform Club, his views concerning the stage were fortunately of a broader character, and on the 19th of February, 1882, he gave a theatrical dinner at Marlborough House. The *Daily News* (February 21st) says with regard to the banquet:—

As much interest is taken in this dinner, given by the Prince of Wales to the Dramatic profession in London, and as many misstatements have been made with regard to the persons invited and not invited, it may answer a useful purpose to publish the exact list of visitors:—Duke of Beaufort, Lord Carrington, Lord Aylesford, Prince Leiningen, the Hon. Ponsonby Fane, Mr. Pigott, Lord Torrington, General Probyn, Hon. H Tyrwhitt-Wilson, Earl of Fife, Colonel Farquharson, Mr. George Lewis, Lord Lytton, Sir George Wombwell, Mr. F. Knollys, Mr. G. A. Sala, Mr. F. C. Burnand, Mr. H. Calcraft, Mr. Charles Hall, Dr. W. H. Russell, Lord Londesborough, Mr. H. Irving, Mr. J. L. Toole, Mr. D. James, Mr. J. Hare, Mr. W. H. Kendal, Mr. E. Bruce, Mr. John Hollingshead, Mr. C. Coghlan, Mr. H. Vezin, Mr. S. Bancroft, Mr. H. Neville, Mr. G. Grossmith, Mr. A. Cecil, Mr. C. Wyndham, Mr. L. Brough, and Mr. J. Clayton. Mr. Byron was asked, but was too ill to attend.

I have mentioned meeting Mrs. Langtry, on her first appearance in London society, and I had afterwards several opportunities of speaking to her about the stage, which I knew she thought of adopting as a profession. At a trial trip of a Brighton Pullman car, lighted for the first time by electricity, I sat next to Mr. George Lewis and Mr. Edmund Yates—both friends and advisers of Mrs. Langtry. The conversation turned upon the theatre, and Mr. Lewis said to me: "I think Mrs. L. has decided at last to take the plunge; would you like to make her an offer?" "Certainly," I said, "without an hour's delay." "What are your ideas about terms?" With my usual impetuosity, I said, "I will give her one hundred pounds a night, and a three months' engagement, if she will act as I direct her." The offer—a "firm" one—was duly conveyed to Mrs. Langtry, and

after a week's delay she wrote me a polite letter, thanking me for my liberal offer, but saying she thought it was better that she should go into a theatre where she could be well-trained in comedy. She was perfectly right, and showed her good sense when she accepted Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft's offer for the Haymarket. I should have started her in comedy at the Opéra Comique for a fortnight, and for the other ten weeks I should have sent her to the principal towns in the United Kingdom. The amounts she played to when she started on her first provincial tour proved that this sporting engagement would not have been one of my failures.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Coquelin and Bernhardt — A compromise — Manchester — Expensive education—The music-hall champion—An army of comedians—Attempts at land speculation.

THE French plays of 1882 began with Sarah Bernhardt, and were followed by M. Coquelin. The great French actor had got over his difficulty with the *Comédie Française* by undertaking not to play with Sarah Bernhardt. He was supported by several members of the *Française* company. The season was concluded with Madame Chaumont.

After the French plays came a week of Irish amateur acting, announced as "in aid of the families of men who have recently been murdered in Ireland

torium. Superficially, it was the most richly decorated theatre in England. Everything that wholesale gilding and Venetian glass could do for it was done, and its sanitary arrangements, both before and behind the curtain, could not be criticised, because they had no existence. I am afraid I offended the good people of Manchester by discovering this fact, and drawing attention to it in the only proper manner—by altering it. I brought the theatre up to what I considered a proper standard of civilization, and with improvements for the convenience and comfort of the audience, including proper ventilation, I spent, on my own account, about £4,000. I managed the theatre with care, attention, and liberality for two or three years, giving my new customers—I call them new, although I had served them intermittently before—the best of everything I could procure. In one season I gave them a series of French performances, including Madame Bernhardt, that Paris could not have beaten, and I can conscientiously say that I never worked harder for any public than I did for the Manchester public—and the six-mile radius. One day, perhaps, I shall get a testimonial for my services, and, if I do, it will be the first bestowed upon me outside the Gaiety Theatre. The Lancashire people are very clannish, and I cannot blame them, but it was not my fault that I was born a Londoner. I had found my second Moscow. At the cost of something like £15,000 I had learnt to speak the Lancashire dialect!

The Gaiety Theatre was not neglected for what are somewhat impolitely called "the provinces." Mr. Reece wrote an autumn burlesque on the subject of "Robin Hood," and a winter burlesque on the subject of "Valentine and Orson." The matinées were more varied, if possible, than ever, comprising benefits, trial trips of actors, actresses, and plays, and appearances

of established actors in parts they would have probably had no chance of playing elsewhere—like Mr. Willard in *Jachimo*, in Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*.

Mrs. Beerbohm Tree, Miss Filippi, Mrs. Bernard Beere, Miss Helen Barry, Miss Laura Villiers, Mr. Gilbert Farquhar, and numbers that I have taken no note of, made their first appearance at these matinées. Actresses coming from America, like Miss Lingard, also re-appeared in this way, after a long absence.

The comic papers were quite right to joke about this, and here is a specimen:—

MATINÉES! MATINÉES!! MATINÉES!!!

MISS TRIXIE (tired of being an "extra"): "I am going to play Juliet, Mr. Hollingshead. Can I have the Gaiety for a matinée next Wednesday?"

MR. HOLLINGSHEAD: "Impossible, my dear. Mr. Sparerib, the pork-butcher, plays Hamlet at next Wednesday's matinée."

My efforts to bring the music-hall (so called) and

There is the graceful Miss Kate Vaughan, Miss Marian West, Miss Cavalier, Miss Gilchrist, Miss Gilbert, Miss Broughton, Miss Howard, and Mr. John Dallas, Mr. John Dauban, and others. I don't forget that if Mr. Chirgwin and Mr. T. W. Barrett had not been found too bashful for the theatre, they would have been included in this list.

The same journals always gave me credit for my endeavours to free the music-halls from legal fetters, and enable them to improve their entertainment by giving short stage-plays. My utterances, entombed in half-a-dozen "blue-books," would be a proof of this, if any proof were needed.

In the early part of March, Mr. F. C. Burnand's *Blue Beard* was produced in three acts, and was the most successful of all these pieces with the exception of the *Forty Thieves*. I had at this time the largest company of "low comedians" ever gathered, in all probability, in one theatre. There were Mr. Edward Terry, Mr. W. Elton, Mr. Royce, Mr. Dallas, Mr. Wyatt, Mr. Monkhouse, Mr. Robert Brough, Mr. Squires, Mr. Arthur Williams, Mr. W. Warde, Mr. Henley, &c. They could not all be used at the same time, and some were kept out of well-paid idleness by acting the uncongenial parts of "understudies."

A large company like this (for these eleven low comedians were only one branch of it) often tempted me to take other theatres, even when I was not suffering from my old theatrical plague. This year it was the Avenue Theatre, which I took with Mr. Michael Gunn and Mr. D'Oyly Carte. Mr. Carte and I were old friends, and it was my own fault that I did not have an interest with him in his successful Gilbert-Sullivan combination at the Opéra Comique, which led to the building of the Savoy Theatre, and afterwards to the erection of the Savoy Hotel. The ground on which the hotel stands belonged to the Metropolitan Board of Works, and no one seemed inclined to take it for several years, for any purpose.

One day I made an offer for it, which I fondly supposed would be kept private, but that was not the mode of conducting business at that time in Spring Gardens. In a week the whole town knew of the offer, and as I was always credited with more cleverness than I possessed, there were plenty of people ready to "follow my lead," and the ground was eventually secured for far more than I cared to pay for it.

Another chance I had of obtaining a large block of cleared land was at Charing Cross on the left side of Northumberland Avenue. It was known as the "leg of mutton" plot, owing to its shape, and comprised the ground on which stand the Grand Hotel and the Constitutional Club. My friend, Mr. Robert Tyler, the architect, had cleverly obtained a very advantageous contract from the Metropolitan Board of Works for this ground, and had found a financier in the City to find all the money required. When the day came to pay a deposit of £15,000, the money for

partment"—the Woods and Forests—and I obtained a year's option on terms that were large, but not considered excessive. The stipulations as to elevation, design, value, &c., of my proposed buildings (which included a summer theatre and garden on the Embankment) were a bogie to my capitalists. Mr. Cates, the Government architect, was fair, friendly, and just, but immovable, and only smiled pleasantly when I called him "A Stoic of the Woods—a man without a tear." I could not "finance it," as the City phrase goes, and returned my option at the end of the year, with regret. Soon afterwards the "Woods" sold the ground for something like £80,000 more than I should have paid for it. The National Liberal Club came on part of the ground, as I knew they would, and my friend, Mr. William Agnew, offered me an original membership. I thanked him, but declined, saying that a man who was not good enough for the Reform Club was not fit to become a National Liberal.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

The New Club, Covent Garden—The Gaiety as a joint-stock company—Mr. H. O'Hagan—The Empire, Leicester-square—The Globe—*The Glass of Fashion*—Unlimited legal and moral liability—My last burlesque—Production in part of the oldest drama in the world—Dinner to Mr. Henry Dixey—Conscience money—Financial summary—Projected new theatre.

AT this time, my friend, Colonel F. Wellesley, was seized with the idea of starting a high-class "Social Club," where balls and concerts, music-hall and dramatic performances would be provided every week in addition to the usual club requirements. I knew Colonel Wellesley's popularity and influence, and, with two other friends, bought "Evans's" in Covent Garden, before described, which after many changes had failed as the "Falstaff Club." Much money and labour had been spent upon the old premises—still the finest for club purposes in London—and in a month or two they were opened under the title of the "New Club." The Prince of Wales was president, the Earl of Lathom chairman, and the committee were nearly all connected with what are called the "Marlborough House set." The Princess of Wales gave a tone to the club, by frequently attending its dances and entertainments in an unceremonious way, and to keep it select, the ballot was very strict, and, by desire of the Prince of Wales, was very often held at Marlborough House, or at the offices of the Sandown Club in St. James's Street. The club was a great social success, under Colonel Wellesley's management, and I eventually handed it over to him, his brother, the Earl of Cowley, relieving

me from a liability of £10,000 to Messrs. Herries and Farquhar, the bankers.

The following extract from an account of the opening in the *Daily Telegraph* will give an idea as to its design and management:—

When not a ticket remained for last night's opening ball of the "New Club"—whose name, resembling that of many an institution no newer than other things under the sun, is probably destined to outlive its present meaning—applications continued to flutter the secretarial department. It seemed as if the mere intimation that the ball-list was finally and irrevocably closed had aroused fresh eagerness in the fashionable world to increase the number on which strict limit had been set. Seven hundred was very discreetly fixed as the maximum; and there was scarcely one more or less than that aggregate in the ball-room during the evening. The Prince and Princess of Wales honoured the occasion with their presence, as did the Duke and Duchess of Albany and the Hereditary Prince of Saxe-Meiningen. The Duchesses of Manchester and Roxburghe were among the company, which also included, to name only a comparatively few representatives of London society, who arrived in quick succession, the Duke of Sutherland, the Duke and Duchess of Richmond and Gordon, the Earl and Countess Granville, Maria Marchioness of Ailesbury, the Marquis and Marchioness of Bath, Lord and Lady Colin Campbell, Lord and Lady Walter Campbell, Viscountess Bridport, the Earl and Countess of Breadalbane, the Earl and Countess of Zetland, the Earl and Countess of Cadogan, the Earl of Fife, Earl and Countess Grosvenor, the Earl of Hopetoun, the Earl and Countess of Kenmare, the Earl and Countess of Hardwicke, the Earl and Countess of Dufferin, the Earl and Countess of Lonsdale, the Dowager Countess of Lonsdale, Viscountess Clifden, Lord and Lady Ashburton, Lord and Lady Kilmarnock, Sir Reginald and Lady Violet Beauchamp, Sir George Chetwynd, Lord and Lady Alington, Lady Alfred and the Misses Churchill, Lord Calthorpe, the Countess Fitzwilliam and Ladies Alice and Albreda Fitzwilliam, Count Münster, jun., Lord and Lady Rossmore, the Marquis of Stafford, M.P., Viscount Melgund, the Marques and Marquesa de Santurce, Lord Algernon Gordon-Lennox, Lord Francis Gordon-Lennox, Lord and Lady Edward Somerset, Mr. Montefiore, the Marquis and Marchioness of Ormonde, the Countess of Strathmore, Mr. and Mrs. H. Oppenheim, Viscount and Viscountess Tarbat, the Hon. Eva Wellesley, Sir George and Lady Julia Wombwell and the Misses Wombwell, Lord and Lady Cremorne, Mr. Henry Chaplin, M.P., Lord Ampthill, and Sir Allen Young.

The history of my last two or three years at the Gaiety may be told very briefly. I had a severe attack of typhoid fever, caught, so I was assured, in

my room at the theatre, and for a year or more afterwards I was conscious of a diminution of nerve and will-power. This, I am told, is a common after-effect of the disease; but the disease itself I looked upon as an impostor, compared with its sturdy brother, rheumatic fever.

I turned the Gaiety into a small joint-stock company without appealing to the public, and associated with it, for a time, the Empire Theatre in Leicester Square. My principal partner was Mr. H. Osborne O'Hagan, and no one could have behaved to me with more honour, liberality and courtesy. He was the best "loser" I ever met, and in that respect even surpassed me.

I took the Globe Theatre with Mr. J. L. Shine, who produced *The Glass of Fashion*, by Mr. Sydney Grundy. The cast included Mr. Beerbohm Tree, Mr. Shine, Miss Lingard, Miss Carlotta Leclercq, Miss Lottie Venne, and others. I ought to have known the subject of this comedy before it was produced, but I had no idea that it was an attack upon "Society journalism." My old friend, Mr. Dutton Cook, naturally defended the *World* in the *World*, and unfortunately died suddenly, before I could make the same lame explanation to him that I had made to my older friend, Edmund Yates.

As fight was shown, however, I was bound to enter the ring against all comers:—

GLOBE THEATRE.—VERY MIXED PRESS OPINIONS.—*Morning Post* (fashionable organ):—"The author has a true sense of character, and depicts it with vigour and felicity." *Vanity Fair* (Society organ):—"Of original character drawing there is absolutely none." *St. James's Gazette*:—"The success of the play depends upon the rude vigour of its dialogue and the effectiveness of some of its studies of character." *Truth* (Society organ):—"The play is clumsily constructed; the characters are mere daubs of impossible men and women." *Whitehall Review* (Society organ):—"As a well-constructed play, with an abundance of smart dialogue and cleverly conceived incidents, the verdict passed on it in the provinces has been emphatically endorsed in

London." *The World* (Society organ) :—"As a picture of life the drama is absurd and impossible." The *Daily Telegraph* has a long report of a twopenny-halfpenny stage accident, occupying as much space as would be devoted to a shipwreck or an earthquake. The *Daily News* and some other papers see "omens" (whatever they may be) in the said twopenny-halfpenny accident. The *Times* makes no allusion to it, and furnishes a key-note to much of the above when it says :—"Condemnation more bitter and unsparing than the author heaps on the modern School for Scandal has not often been heard from the stage." The *Standard*, *Echo*, *Pall Mall Gazette*, *Globe*, *Graphic*, *Athenæum*, *Illustrated News*, &c., have all long and favourable—perhaps too favourable?—notices. The play has caused criticism to give itself a new phrase. One of the performers is called a "breezy actor."

Mr. J. L. Shine became associated with me in the management of the Gaiety, under the "company" proprietorship, and as every notice, advertisement and letter did not bear the imprint of "Gaiety Theatre Company, Limited," but on the contrary the everlasting "John Hollingshead, Lessee and Manager," I was eventually held legally responsible for many corporate debts, and felt morally responsible for a good many more. The "company" was wound up and retired, leaving me in possession of the theatre, and I gave up its twin, the Empire, as I could not at that time persuade its chief proprietor to consent to its being turned into a music-hall. When, at last, it developed into this institution, it was manifestly only fulfilling its destiny.

The French plays, with Sarah Bernhardt, Madame Pierson, Madame Judic, and others, went on as usual during the summers of 1883 and 1884, and the next year 1885 they were continued, but I handed over, for the first time, the financial responsibility to Mr. M. L. Mayer. The labour of organisation had always been his, and without it the public would not have secured the infinite variety. The profits on the *Comédie Française* were abnormally large as I have frankly stated, but the losses on several other seasons were considerable, and I found I had been working very much for that intangible asset—*Kudos*.

At the close of 1884 I had to regret the sudden death at his post of one of my oldest and most faithful servants, George Moore, the stage door-keeper. He had occupied that position for sixteen years, and had been, so to speak, the guardian of a stage which, notwithstanding its flippant character, was the most strictly managed stage in London. I claim no virtue for this, only trade policy. A stage that might be open to all comers would mean a half empty house. Stage idlers are even worse than the "free list."

At the close of 1885 I accepted my last burlesque at the Gaiety, and cast it with two or three important additions to the company. The subject was *Jack Sheppard*, and the authors were my old friends, Mr. Pottinger Stephens and Mr. William Yardley. They had both supplied pieces, and had helped to work the theatre during the past year and the year previous. Mr. Terry's long engagement having expired, I engaged Mr. David James and Mr. Fred Leslie, Miss Marion Hood, Miss Sylvia Grey, and others, Miss

the oldest drama in the world, the *Shakuntala of Calidasa*. This completed my seventeen years of "variety" showmanship in what I thought was a worthy manner. Very few actors, actresses, and authors during that seventeen years had not appeared or been represented on the Gaiety stage—the few exceptions proving the rule—and I was satisfied when I saw the curtain drop on the B.C. ancient legendary Eastern drama.

In the summer of 1886 I dissolved partnership with Mr. George Edwardes, and gave him, from that time, the sole control of the theatre. My last public appearance, of any importance, was when I took the chair at the banquet given by Mr. Edwardes and myself to the American actor, Mr. Henry Dixey, who came over with a company from America to play in a variety piece, called *Adonis*, at the Gaiety. More than three hundred representative people were present, and the American Minister, Mr. Phelps, sat on my left hand. When Mr. Dixey heard that I was leaving the Gaiety, he was quite justified in assuming financial reasons, and he very generously made me a substantial offer of help without a minute's delay, which I acknowledged most kindly, but did not accept.

Mr. Labouchere's paper had always been one of my severest and most sensible critics, and it was, therefore, agreeable to me to read the following unsought paragraph:—

"TRUTH," SEPT. 16, 1886.

This is an age of testimonials, deserved and undeserved. Is nothing to be done to commemorate Mr. John Hollingshead's services to the Drama, and his good-natured management of one of London's most popular theatres?

A number of friends, literary, artistic, and connected with public life, formed a small committee to carry out this idea, and their efforts were so far

satisfactory, as proving that, in spite of my Rabelaisian indiscretions, I had not lost the respect of a very wide and influential circle.

To show that theatrical managers, like Chancellors of the Exchequer, are recipients of "Conscience Money," I print the following letter received towards the close of my management:—

36, CATHERINE STREET,
STRAND, LONDON, W.C.

DEAR SIR, *May 20th*, 1886.

I am requested by one of the Clergy of Corpus Christi, Maiden Lane, to hand you over One Guinea for Conscience Money.

I am, Dear Sir, yours respectfully,

To JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD, Esq. JOS. ZAEHNSDORF.

When I had settled upon my retirement, I supplied the *Era* with material for the following semi-official statement:—

Mr. John Hollingshead, who has taken very little share in the active management of the Gaiety Theatre since the production of *Jack Sheppard* and the reception of Mr. Dixey, has voluntarily dissolved his partnership with Mr. George Edwardes, and has handed the property, with all that it covers, to that gentleman with the best wishes for his

In 1884, under Mr. Hollingshead and a limited company, the receipts, with the house closed for three weeks, were £33,306, and in 1885, with a closing of six weeks, the receipts were £31,270, making a grand total of £672,777 13*s.* 9*d.* The house has been closed only eighteen weeks in seventeen years, and there have been 959 matinées, equal to three years and thirty nights.

Mr. Hollingshead produced during this period thirty short burlesques, seven three-act burlesques, one Christmas piece in six-acts and twelve scenes, two morning pantomimes, and a score of operas bouffe.

If I had turned my back upon the Gaiety ten or twelve years earlier I should probably have entered upon a political career. I had many influential friends who urged me to do so from time to time, and one, who was not a thick and thin admirer of the theatre, offered to procure me a seat and give me the necessary qualification. All this he was quite able to do, and I appreciated the offer, but I felt that my theatrical career secured me more independence. I had always got my other trade—the writing trade, as Charles Reade used to call it—in case of accidents, to fall back upon.

When I left the Gaiety I was not free from certain disputed joint-stock liabilities, which induced me to nourish the idea of building a theatre of my own in a part of the town which I then considered was to be the great amusement market of the future. When the island of houses in Piccadilly Circus was cleared away, and Shaftesbury Avenue was cut by the Metropolitan Board of Works, I, with a friend, was the first to secure a prominent piece of ground in the Avenue within sight of Piccadilly, for which we had to pay a considerable premium. The Board had altered its modes of dealing since the day when I got the "call" of the best part of Northumberland Avenue for nothing. The Board, when the London Pavilion was being built and the Avenue constructed, was never allowed to stir except through the instrumentality of a few moving spirits.

The Prince of Wales took a friendly interest in my

new theatre and advised me to go to Frankfort (on the Maine) to inspect and get a few ideas from the New State Theatre. I soon had D'Oyly Carte as a companion on the Avenue, who took the ground on which he subsequently built the Palace Theatre. Mr. John Lancaster followed by taking the site on which he ra[illegible] Theatre. I eventually sold my[illegible] the Board of Works' premium an[illegible]m besides, and after additional la[illegible]d by the purchasers, the Lyric T[illegible]

CHAPTER XXXIV.

The Niagara Panorama—American friends—Visit to America—New York — Buffalo — Niagara — Albany—Mosquitoes : a few !—Great heat—" Where are the children ! "—Milton's house—The American Eagle—Society patronage—A successful picture, and adjuncts.

AT the close of 1886, Colonel O. Sheppard, of Buffalo, U.S., came to me with a letter from Mr. Kyrle Bellew, to ask if I was at liberty to help him in establishing in London a large panorama representing Niagara Falls, painted by the celebrated artist Phillipoteaux. He represented a syndicate of American friends, and had a credit of £20,000 at the leading London American bankers. Colonel Sheppard, a most agreeable gentleman, who had been in the American diplomatic service, was not a big man —in fact he was what we should call, without offence, a small man—but his scheme, I soon realised, was a very large one. He wanted a building or a site in some central part of London that I could recommend to show this canvas, and he was quite prepared to pay for position. I soon found a difficulty in the size of the circle he required. A diameter of 140 feet, and three times that for circumference, could not be got even by a heavy cash payment. Her Majesty's Theatre in the Haymarket, now destroyed, but then vacant, looked a likely place, but when tested with the two-foot rule, it was found to be long enough from south to north but not broad enough from east to west. This difficulty we met with in various parts of central London, and the nearest approach we had to success was with the Soho Bazaar in Oxford-street and Soho-square, but we failed, for various reasons, to come to a satisfactory arrangement with the pro-

prietor. We were driven at last, as I fully expected and said we should be, to take a then unoccupied panoramic building in York-street, Westminster, theoretically close to everything, but practically, as I considered, out of the showman's real world. I advised the taking of this place "in one of the fourteen York-[illegible]" as I afterwards described it [illegible] because there was absolutely no [illegible]space to be found to suit us. I [illegible]gs. I explained to Colonel Sh[illegible] words of the thing called an [illegible]re truth than all the affidavits fi[illegible] ever contained, that to the best [illegible]nd belief the British public respecte[illegible] doubtless learn once more, as they had [illegible]s gone by, to enjoy the simple luxury of looking [illegible] cyclorama, but they loved eating, they adored drinking (in moderation), and they could not live without smoking. For these reasons I advised the purchase of certain old house property in front of the great circular building, which had been erected somewhat at the back, overlooking the yards of the Wellington Barracks, and the erection of a grand entrance hall, café and restaurant, to be enlivened by that luxury doled out so sparingly by the licensing authorities—the luxury of music.

Colonel Sheppard adopted my suggestions, secured the buildings, and then returned to America in the early part of 1887. In July, 1887, I received an invitation to visit Buffalo, U.S., as a guest of the Syndicate, to see the real Niagara Falls, and to confer about the picture and its adjuncts.

I started on board the *Etruria* in the hottest July known for many years in England, and arrived in August at New York in the hottest summer known for some years in America.

When I got to the Gilsey House Hotel, the com-

fortable quarters considerately provided for me, I found the energetic newspaper reporters waiting for me at eight o'clock in the morning, and, when I had got through my "interviewing," I sat down to breakfast in the midst of a tropical thunderstorm, which swept the street of all awnings and temporary structures. I had many friends in America, literary, artistic, and theatrical, and my difficulty was in accepting all the hospitality offered me. I could have lived the life of the traditional fighting-cock in the country for six months and more without paying one hotel bill. I owed much of this to my well-known connection with Dickens. The love and admiration for Dickens in America wherever I went were only equalled by the eagerness and curiosity to know what he was like personally, what his tastes and habits were, and every detail of his existence.

Colonel Sheppard and Mr. Philo Beard, the leading member of the syndicate, took me the next day to Buffalo, where I was entertained at the chief club, and the next day I went to Niagara Falls, about forty miles off, and stayed a day or two, accompanied by my new friends, to study the subject of our great cycloramic picture. I was introduced to the "Cave of the Winds" immediately on my arrival, and, encased from head to foot in oilskins, with list shoes on my feet to prevent me slipping, I was plunged in the midst of that everlasting war between air and water, the forces of which made the strongest man a deafened, helpless atom. As I stepped from one slippery rock to another, with the savage torrent arched and roaring above my head, I made the guide distinctly understand that if I went to perdition he would have to go with me. Being a thorough American, he admired the tone I adopted. I went across the lake by steamer to Toronto, and was in that little Canadian city twenty minutes.

I found the residential part of Buffalo, U.S., with the gardens of the houses running down to the footway, and open to the passers by, and the fine old trees of the primeval forest making a boulevard on each side of the roadway finer than those in Paris before the maniacs of 1848 cut them down, almost as pleasant and impressive, in a different way, as Seville, with its roofs of flowers. I was treated with the utmost kindness everywhere, and made many valued friends, whom I still retain. I had one recommendation—no one respects the 4th of July, with all that its observance means in America, more than I do.

I went from Buffalo to Albany, and from Albany down the Hudson to New York—a summer's day journey. The boats were floating hotels; the river a combination of the Rhine, the Danube, and the Lake of the Four Cantons. I could not see the legendary Catskills—the country of Rip Van Winkle—for the mist, but I saw one of the finest rivers in the world, a whole summer's day without a sign of outdoor life upon its waters. No houseboats, no rowing boats, no fishing parties, no steam launches. One or two big steam pleasure-boats were lying silently moored off riverside holdings, but the owners were away, probably hunting the mighty dollar in the city? I thought of the happy, idle population always living in the open on our picturesque ditch, the Thames, and thought I had found the secret of its popularity with all Americans.

When I arrived again in New York I found my dear old friend, Billy Florence, ready to meet me, and devote himself to my service. I had been made an honorary member of half-a-dozen leading New York clubs, and found a difficulty in paying for anything. Billy, with the aid of Wright Sandford, got up a big dinner in my honour at the Manhattan Club, although everybody, so to speak, was away from the city. We

sat down about seventeen with an excellent summer banquet and a splendid dish of telegrams of regret before us from various parts of the States and various people, one from Joseph Jefferson being on the top.

Florence, who had lived for twenty years in the same hotel—the Madison Square Hotel—gave a private dinner there to myself and two or three friends, and I noticed that everything—soup, fish, entrées, meat, game, pastry, &c.—was brought in hot at once, and put upon a side table. I cannot honestly recommend this plan, and when I lunched at "Delmonico's" I had no difficulty in discovering why it was so popular. It had copied Paris.

Mr. and Mrs. Florence, with a sincere desire to give me a treat, arranged to take me to a fashionable Saturday to Monday resort, called "New Babylon," on Long Island. We drove out in an open carriage on the Saturday afternoon under a long avenue of trees. I entered the avenue with a complexion like a mixture of the peach with the russet-pippin, and came out at the other end like a hopeless case of skin disease discharged from some hospital. The cause, I fancy, was mosquitoes, but few people seemed to care to admit the existence of these insects. Florence was more troubled about the attack than I was. As there was much to show, but very little irritation, I treated it lightly, and said when I returned to New York, I should go to a "dime-show," and earn a few dollars by exhibiting myself as the grandfather of the "Spotted Boy."

On the Sunday at the semi-state *table d'hôte* dinner at the hotel, where several hundreds of ladies and gentlemen with their families—the pick of New York—were seated, I walked down the whole length of the room to the little table engaged by the Florences. I was not unobserved. That night most of the residents called for their bills, and, gathering their children

together in the morning, fled by the ten o'clock express train back to New York. And still the hotel manager would not confess to mosquitoes! Some people suffered more than others from "prickly heat"; but as to mosquitoes—he'd never seen one!

I returned to England by the *Umbria*, leaving New York, like a boiling cauldron, behind me. I had religiously abstained from writing any account of my visit for certain newspapers, although I had been pressed to do so I was a guest in the country, and it is hardly polite of guests to criticise the details of well-meant hospitality. One thing, however, I could not fail to notice. I am very fond of children, but I could find no children in America. My travels, it is true, were limited, and my powers of observation may have been equally limited, but still I said to myself, where are the children? I have found many young ladies and gentlemen, but where are the children?

One morning I was promenading the long deck, very early, as usual, and I noticed a little girl, apparently about seven years of age, who was promenading likewise, and did not seem to mind the rather rough weather. I spoke to the child and said, "You're quite a little sailor!"

"Well, sir," she said, without the slightest hesitation, "I've been three times on the Mediterranean; four times on the Pacific Ocean, and this is my eighth voyage across the Atlantic!"

I looked at her with astonishment, not altogether unmixed with fear; and again I said, almost sorrowfully, "Where are the children?"

Colonel Sheppard returned to England with me, and we went to work to pull down houses and erect our hall. We were in an historical neighbourhood. There was a mysterious passage in our foundations said to lead from the Panorama building under St. James's Park to St. James's Palace, and to have been

the underground alley used by Charles the Second, when he visited Nell Gwynne at her cottage in York Street, which had been destroyed by the Panorama building. I was not surprised to find traces of Nell Gwynne, because no part of London seems to be without them, and I was only surprised that the remains of one of Queen Elizabeth's hunting-lodges had not been discovered, as they, like Nell Gwynne's reputed houses, are equally plentiful. We bought and pulled down five houses; if we had bought the sixth at the east end of the block, we should have come into possession of the house and garden where blind John Milton wrote much of "Paradise Lost." This house had been the property of Jeremy Bentham, who let it to William Hazlitt, and afterwards to James Mill, the father of John Stuart Mill, and the author of the "History of British India," which hinted doubts (since confirmed) of the value of our supposed El Dorado in the East, that John Bright said existed to support a system of out-door relief for the British aristocracy. Milton's house and garden existed when we began our new buildings, and the old crumbled red-brick wall formed the eastern boundary of our property. It is now all smothered by the House of Correction standing on end, known as the New Queen Anne's Mansions.

As we had no liquor licence for our new hall, and no chance of getting it, we bought an antique pot-house on the opposite side of the road, called the "Black Horse," which was sacred to the memory of Dick Turpin. The legend connected with the house favoured the belief that he started with "Black Bess" from the stable at the back on his famous ride to York. We gave £500 to the brewers in possession of the premises for the lease, and this enabled us to supply our visitors with strong drinks as long as they paid for them in Niagara Hall, where they were then

allowed to consume them. I explained this, and other comic features of our licensing laws, to my American friends, and told them that we need not apply for a music-licence, the music being confined to the outer hall, where there was no charge for admission, and it did not form "a substantial part of the entertainment." We bought a large orchestrion, worked with a gas engine, paying £800 for the instrument. We started an engine and boiler to make our electric light, and had a search-light on the top of the building of fabulous candle power to show the strollers in Piccadilly that something was going on at the other side of the park. I engaged one of the half-dozen leading cooks in London, M. Beguinot, who had been with Lord Granville and Lord Spencer, and who might, I believe, have been *chef* at Marlborough House; dinners and luncheons were served that could not be beaten in London, but we had to draw the line at suppers, for our "Refreshment House Licence" made it penal to sell even a bottle of boiled ginger-beer after ten o'clock at night, the hour at which we closed the panorama. We called the whole exhibition "Niagara in London"; we got it talked about and written about; avoided posters, which I never believed in, and set to work to get everybody of importance to visit the place. Royalty came to tea, and to late dinners; my press friends rallied round me as they generally do, and in the "Society" gatherings I was ably assisted by my young friend, Mr. Gilbert Farquhar, who knows most people, and whose kindness we acknowledged with a little piece of plate. The place was a success, and my American friends had every reason to be satisfied with their investment. When Colonel Sheppard left, Mr. Hayward took his place; when Mr. Hayward left, he was followed by Captain Hunsicker, and Captain Hunsicker was followed by Mr. Scatchard. All these

American directors became my friends, one after the other, particularly Captain Hunsicker. I remained always the English director.

In arranging the architectural elevation of the front hall, I thought it would be a compliment to the United States to give it as much of a star and stripe character as possible, especially as antiquarian report said that William Pitt lived in an old house up the street on our side of the way, where he ate his cold legs of mutton, and did his best for an obstinate king to conduct the fratricidal war in America, or "His Majesty's Plantations."

I suggested the American Eagle as a dominant design, and it was ordered from a little group of British workmen and artists. When it came in, modelled in terra-cotta, it was hauled up to its commanding place, and examined critically by all of us. I suppose some fleeting memory of Bunker's Hill had rankled in the breasts of the artizans; some Rule Britannia influence very difficult to gauge and account for. Everyone looked to me for an opinion. "Well," said Sheppard, "what do you think?" My answer was very short: "Turkey and sausages, by God!"

The attempt to transplant a duplicate of our Niagara Picture to Paris, in 1889, painted by the same artist, who, with his father, was the painter of "PARIS DURING THE SIEGE," was not successful. I was the Chairman and Managing Director of the Company. We had a fine position in the *Avenue du Bois de Boulogne* (since built up with mansions). We had a café, restaurant, and a Roumanian band, but all to no purpose. The Great Exhibition of 1889 was too much for us.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Music-hall directorships — The Corinthian Club — Defence of truth against mock-modest humbug, and financial hypocrisy—Invitation to stand for the London County Council in the Strand district—Declined on political grounds—The Court of Bankruptcy and the Board of Trade—The Alhambra in 1892—The Princess's in 1893.

WHILE managing "Niagara in London," I was a director of a number of Theatre of Variety Companies: The Canterbury at Lambeth, the Paragon at Mile End, the Royal in Holborn, the Empire in Edinburgh, the Empire in Bristol, the Folly in Manchester, and many others. As every Director is abused, some time or other, by shareholders, with or without reason, my life, it may be imagined, was not a bed of roses. Fortunately meetings are not held every day, and there is some time left for peace and quietness. In the case of the Niagara in Paris Company I obtained a vote of thanks, scarcely deserved, from the shareholders, for being the only one of the Directors who did not resign or run away. Having nothing to conceal, I was not afraid to face a stormy meeting.

The "Niagara in London" panorama being wanted for Chicago, was replaced by a "Jerusalem" panorama, painted and bought in America, which turned out, unknown to the purchasers, my American friends, to be a copy of a Munich panorama. An action at law was begun under the new copyright powers given by the Berne Convention, and as my friends were defeated in the first court, and did not care to appeal, they sold the whole building and the picture to the

plaintiff, Mr. John Fishbourne, in whose possession they now remain.

While a number of my American friends were in London, many of their friends were continually coming and going, until they formed a special American colony. Their headquarters were the Victoria Hotel, in Northumberland Avenue. Through them and other friends who were dissatisfied with the pig-headed legislation which insists on applying a law probably, but not obviously, necessary for a Whitechapel gin-shop to every West-end restaurant, I was induced to start a "social club" on the lines of the "New Club," membership of which should be open to the professional and artistic classes. I selected a place and a locality that removed it from the suspicion of being a hole-and-corner club, existing only for midnight revels that shun publicity. I rented a building in York Street (another York Street), St. James's, that in the last century had been the show room of the immortal English potter, Wedgwood, and which, after being successively the chapel of the Spanish Embassy, and a chapel held by the Rev. Stopford Brooke, had fallen into clubland and been opened once or twice, under various titles, with no great success. The landlord was a noble lord and a privy councillor, and the rent and taxes were high enough to compel a corresponding standard of conduct. I took these premises, made substantial alterations and improvements, engaged my friend, M. Beguinot, as *chef*, and the same Viennese band we had at the New Club, and opened it under the title of the "Corinthian Club." My views and aspirations were correctly reported in the *World* of February 6, 1889:—

If Mr. John Hollingshead sticks firmly to the rules which he has framed, "on a broad and liberal basis," for the conduct of his latest venture, there is no reason why the "Corinthians" should not prosper

dinners"; the
Mr. Hollingshead has alr
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club, happily christened th
and smartest resorts in all

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not been there long befo
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St. James's Square. Ou
music began at eleven, ar
the "New Club" hours.
house, and, putting myse
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that if I could not stop the
remove the club at any c
faith, I spent quite £1000 ir
&c., till I overcame the diffic
over to a "limited co
from

"courage of their opinions" and their financial interests. My name had long ceased to be connected with the club, as I had long ceased to be responsible for its direction, but as it was a child of mine, and I am never ashamed of my family, I defended it, as usual, by an appeal to my real and only friends—the public. I selected on this occasion the *Pall Mall Gazette*, February 7, 1893:—

NIGHT CLUBS AND SHAM MORALITY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "PALL MALL GAZETTE."

DEAR SIR,—When the police, with their usual clumsy insolence, were "raiding" the Corinthian Club, the fact was made known to the gaping public in the interest of "special editions" with all the effective arts of the bill-poster, but when the grand jury administered a well-deserved snub to fussy constables and pliant magistrates by throwing out the bill against the servants of the club, I looked for paragraphs of equal publicity, but failed to see them. A more honest, straightforward club was never started in London. From the very first its true character was known to every person connected with it, from the noble landlord who collected a handsome rent, to the parochial authorities and the Government who collected handsome rates and taxes. When it was started, it supplied an acknowledged want, and this want has now been further supplied by half-a-dozen important imitators. It was a club that required delicate and careful management, as being situated in a small side street in St. James's Square, and by reason of its late hours it easily became an acknowledged nuisance to its neighbours. This was the beginning and end of its offence—an offence that was always readily admitted to the authorities, who never hesitated as to the propriety of collecting their rates and taxes. Until the infamous half-past twelve o'clock Act is repealed—that standing disgrace to so-called Liberal legislation—these clubs will increase and multiply. The farce in this case is the fact that the instruments of the prosecution are the authorities who are responsible for that disgrace to civilisation, London, and England, the open-air midnight *Petite Bourse* of prostitution at Piccadilly Circus. It is time that the heroes of the great Fourpenny Ale case at the Alhambra (another abortive police prosecution) should be made to show what they have done to foster the growth of this metropolitan cancer.

JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

It was very satisfactory to me to read in an able and independent journal, like the *National Observer*, of February 11, 1893 (a few days afterwards), an

article approving of this letter, headed "Honest John," from which I will make a few ungarbled extracts :—

> It is not for nothing that honesty is coupled with the name of Mr. John Hollingshead. There has always been an element of Quixotism in this hero's denunciation of hypocrisy, in his determination to recognise facts precisely as he finds them. He has championed many a losing cause; he has waged a persistent war against prigs and prudes; in fact he has performed that most delicate task of worldliness which the judicious would be only too proud to perform if they dared incur the necessary odium. Being Mr. Stead's antithesis, he has no desire to kick against the pricks, and he would therefore be a far juster arbiter of morals than the sublimation of the Nonconformist conscience. His last appearance in print is straightforward as it is characteristic; withal it unpleasantly reveals the burden of Pecksniffism under which the British Empire reels . . . . Mr. Hollingshead's protest, decent and honest as it is, is the one pleasant feature in a discreditable business.

My opinions and former connection with the Gaiety notwithstanding, the Strand Liberal and Radical Association thought me a fit candidate for the London County Council. I sent the correspondence to the *Globe*, which exists in the heart of the district :—

"GARRICK CLUB, W.C.,
"February 24, 1891.

"DEAR SIR,—I am much obliged to you and the members of your Executive Committee for the compliment you have paid me, but I must reluctantly decline to become a candidate for two reasons:—1st, I object to politics being imported into strictly municipal affairs; 2nd, I have so many Conservative friends in the Strand district that I should not like to put them in the painful position of having to vote against me.

"Yours very truly,

"CHARLES J. MUNICH, Esq." "JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

Perhaps if the following letter, published in the *Daily Telegraph* of June 2, 1891, about three months afterwards, had appeared three or four months earlier, I should not have been honoured with this offer, for I am sorry to say that I have long associated the Liberal party with every form of social repression. If I want pure social liberty, I should seek it in St. Petersburg and Moscow rather than in London. It was John Bright, many years ago, who warned the Liberal party of the road they were travelling, when he said that France could boast of far more social freedom than the land of Magna Charta, the Bill of Rights and Rule Britannia. I reprint the *Daily Telegraph* letter:—

THE NEW BUMBLEDOM.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "DAILY TELEGRAPH."

SIR,—To-morrow (Wednesday) afternoon, about two or three o'clock, unless the state of public business prevents it, the New Theatres and Music Halls Bill of the London County Council will be brought before an expectant House of Commons for second reading. This bill has not reached its present stage without the usual hole-and-corner meetings—some in the luncheon rooms of fashionable clubs, some in the form of "deputations," and many in the back parlours of Parliamentary agents. The outcome of all this higgling, consultation, conference, and refreshment is a bill proposing that a rump-steak pudding shall not be a rump-steak pudding, or, in other words, that a ballet shall not be a stage play, and that music-halls shall be allowed to break the law for periods of not more than twenty minutes, an interval of one hour being secured between the commission of each crime. There are advocates of the

music-halls who repudiate the idea of crime in connection with so-called "sketches" because these infringements, in many cases, of the Copyright Acts, and, in all cases, of the Theatres Act (6 & 7 Vict. cap. 68), have not been interfered with for twenty years. This is applying the Squatter Theory in a new direction, and placing the "sketchers" in the position of those stallholders in Whitechapel who have not been "moved on" for so many years that they have acquired a supposed right of property in the kerbstone. There are advocates of the theatres, on the other hand, who regard "sketches" as plays of "incestuous and adulterous birth," which in time, with their surroundings, will prove to be the destroying cancer of dramatic art.

This is a very awful-looking bogie to fight against, but on examination it turns out to be the old hollow turnip-headed scarecrow, effective only with children and idiots. Unless London differs in some mysterious and unexplained way from all other civilised cities in Europe, what can happen here that has never happened in places blessed with free trade in amusements? The wildest advocates of music-hall emancipation never dream of asking more than has been granted freely in Paris for thirty years past without any perceptible injury to art, manners, or morals. As in England, artistes of commanding or marketable talent have risen, during this time, from the music-hall to the theatre, while the surplus population of the theatre has often found temporary and remunerative employment at the music-halls.

During the discussion of this New Theatres Bill a feeble and not altogether unexpected cry had been raised for a new Royal Commission. What do those who raise this cry want? Do they wish to tie up the

Letters to newspapers and articles, as I found with regard to the Buildings of the International Exhibition of 1862, do not always alter or stop events, and the Second Theatrical Parliamentary Committee was appointed and went through the same work. This produced another letter in the *Daily Telegraph*.

THE HOMŒOPATHIC DRAMA.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "DAILY TELEGRAPH."

SIR,—The world to-day is richer by another Blue Book. The report of the Parliamentary Theatrical Committee has been issued, as the previous report of a former Committee was issued twenty-six years ago, and it remains to be seen whether with the same result. In the meantime, the unlicensed homœopathic drama is being played all over the country, and the pig-headed amusement laws, more suitable for the government of swine than the intelligent tax-paying multitude, are brought into well-deserved contempt. Some day, perhaps, a small but compact majority may stop the Supply vote until it has been earned by a little parochial legislation, and Parliament is made something more than a Lowther Arcade doll, which requires a hundred millions sterling to be dropped in the slot that it may squeak out the phrases "Home Rule" and "Egypt."

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

LONDON, *August* 22, 1892. JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

In February, 1892, I made my first appearance in the Bankruptcy Court. It was a new experience. I knew there was much folly in the world, some of it legalised, and some of it called government, but I had no idea that it was half as bulky. The worship of the SACRED JACKASS has almost attained the dimensions of a State religion. As usual, I stated my case to my friends, the public, in the *Daily Telegraph* of February 22, 1892.

In re JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "DAILY TELEGRAPH."

SIR,—In the hot and hasty report in most of the papers of the "receiving order" made against me on Friday (made, by the way, on a debt which is not mine, but another's), two stupid errors have crept in for which I am not responsible. I am described as of 252, Holborn (why, I cannot imagine), and as a music-hall proprietor. I have no footing in Holborn, and, unfortunately, I am not a music-hall proprietor,

or proprietor of anything of much value. The "receiving order" has deprived me of all present sources of income, earned mostly under articles of association, and yet in due course I shall be asked if I have any proposal to make. This is the wisdom of the Legislature. Bankruptcy notices and bankruptcy petitions want a little legislative attention. Some time ago I drew Sir Albert Rollit's attention to this subject. About one notice in a thousand and one petition in a hundred are intended to lead to bankruptcy. They are only used as instruments of torture to extract fancy costs, and the machinery of the court is set in motion to give an extra turn to the screw. The people who mostly benefit by this are the carrion crows of the legal profession and its surroundings.

My friends will be glad to know that I am not dead or defeated yet, and that not one of my old artistic comrades, or the theatrical tradesmen who have trusted me, to my loss, when I foolishly thought I was a "limited company," will have the pleasure of appearing amongst my creditors.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

LONDON, *Feb.* 20, 1892. JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

In March of the same year, I tried the General Management of my old house the Alhambra, but I found I had too much responsibility and too little authority. I did my work conscientiously, for I was always a good servant, but I resigned at the end of the year, shortly after I had invented and produced the Christmas ballet of *Aladdin*. The press on this production were almost too unanimous and enthusiastic. I could fill a dozen pages of this book with favourable "notices" such as I have rarely seen during my long experience. Even now, after two years, I read in *Sketch*, of October 3, 1894:—

"For my part I was quite content with *Aladdin*, and I should be quite content to see another *Aladdin* on the same boards again."

When I left the Alhambra, I went back more thoroughly to my old trade, journalism. It has one recommendation, it requires very little capital. Twopennyworth of pens, ink, paper, and pencils, sets up the workman. My short connection with the Princess's Theatre in the autumn of 1893 was ill-advised, and I have no one to blame but myself. I

still believe in the fundamental idea of that short and unsuccessful management—"cheap prices, no fees, and good entertainment." I may yet give practical shape and form to that idea. If I incurred no legal liabilities under that management, I incurred moral obligations. I have passed half my life in paying moral obligations. I hope to pay these. There is not a man, woman, or child in the dramatic profession who would believe that I should think of anything or anybody, myself included, until I had paid my debts of honour. The dramatic profession and myself are quits and something more. On one side I may owe a few hundreds, on the other side I could claim several thousands.

I have now concluded my long and not very important story. I have followed Rousseau's example by telling the truth—the truth about myself—and I have tried to improve upon Rousseau by avoiding his maudlin sentimentality.

In order to tell this truth, I have lived several months in a charnel-house, and at every step I took I stumbled over the corpse of a dead friend.

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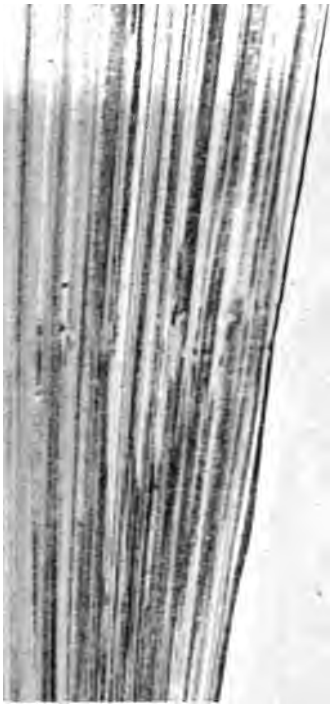

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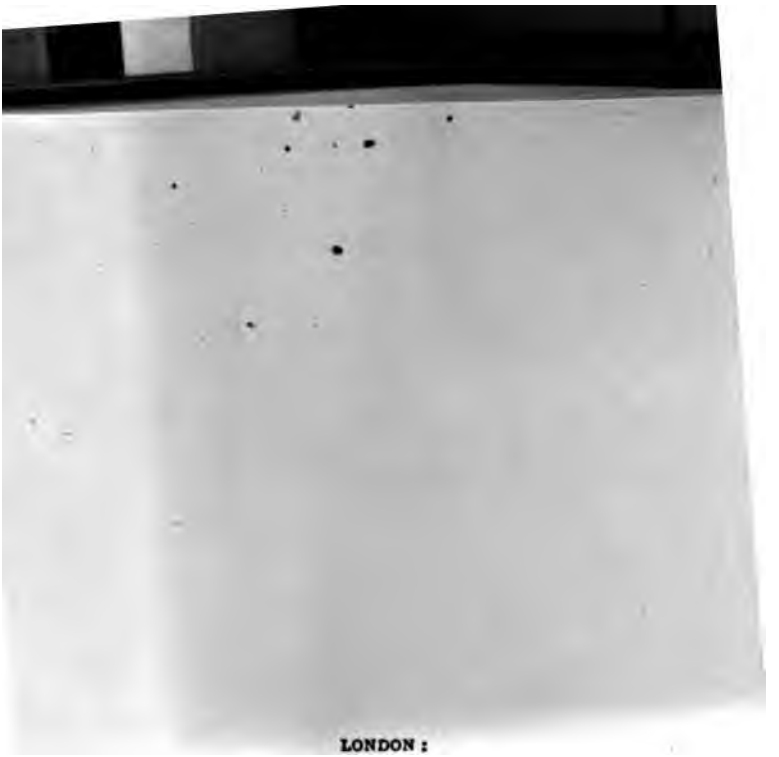

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